

**Group of Experts on Action against Violence  
against Women and Domestic Violence  
(GREVIO)**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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**Report submitted by the United Kingdom  
pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1  
of the Council of Europe Convention  
on preventing and combating violence  
against women and domestic violence  
(Baseline Report)**

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# **UNITED KINGDOM RESPONSE TO GREVIO'S QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER MEASURES GIVING EFFECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTION ON PREVENTING AND COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: JUNE 2023**

## **I. Introduction**

**B.** The UK has a Women, Peace and Security (WPS) National Action Plan (NAP)<sup>1</sup>. The WPS agenda serves to prevent conflict and sexual and gender-based violence, protect women's and girls' safety and human rights, support women's participation in conflict resolution and peace processes, and ensure the particular needs of women and girls are addressed in relief and recovery processes.

The UK is at the forefront of the advancement of the WPS agenda. Over the last two decades the UK has strengthened the international policy framework through supporting nine further UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) and delivering WPS policy and programming across Fragile and Conflict Affected States (FCAS).

Joint Service Publication (JSP) 985<sup>2</sup> sets out UK Defence's Human Security approach which is underpinned by UNSCRs, NATO policies and the WPS NAP. It details how UK Defence will ensure the guiding principles of the NAP on WPS are followed and reinforced.

JSP 769<sup>3</sup> outlines acts and behaviours that constitute sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and provides a framework for the prevention, reporting and handling of allegations of SEA including conflict related sexual abuse (CRSA). It is the authoritative policy and guidance on SEA behaviours and contains direction on processes to be followed for all Defence people.

**D.** The Home Office is the official body responsible for co-ordinating the collection of information in response to this questionnaire. The government departments that contributed to this questionnaire include the Home Office, Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Defence (MoD), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Department for Education (DfE), Department of Health and Social Care (DHSE), Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department for Science, Innovation & Technology (DSIT). The Office for National Statistics and the College of Policing have also contributed to this questionnaire. Furthermore, contributions from the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive have been included in relation to devolved matters.

## **II. Integrated policies and data collection**

**A.** Crimes that fall under the umbrella of violence against women and girls ('VAWG') include rape and other sexual offences, stalking, domestic abuse, 'honour'-based abuse (including female genital mutilation, forced marriage and 'honour killings'), 'revenge porn' and 'upskirting', and these can occur online as well as offline. This is not an exhaustive list of offences. These crimes disproportionately, but not exclusively, impact women and girls.

In July 2021, the cross-government [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) Strategy](#) was published. This aims to help ensure women and girls are safe everywhere: at home, online, at work and on the streets. This was followed by a complementary cross-Government [Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan](#), published in March 2022. These documents, covering England and Wales, aim to transform the whole of society's responses to these crimes with actions to prevent abuse, support victims and pursue perpetrators, as well as to strengthen the response of systems to VAWG. These strategies are designed to be in place until the end of this Parliament, or the end of the 2024/2025 financial year. Although VAWG crimes

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<sup>1</sup> [UK Women Peace and Security National Action Plan 2023-2027 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [20211209\\_JSP\\_985\\_Vol\\_1.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [JSP\\_769\\_V1.0\\_Jul\\_2022.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

disproportionately affect women and girls, the commitments set out in the Strategy and Plan are designed to benefit all victims of such crimes, including men and boys.

Victims are placed at the centre of these strategies. They were informed by the [Violence Against Women and Girls Call for Evidence](#) which ran in 2021 and which received over 180,000 responses. The Call for Evidence included a public-facing survey, as well as a nationally representative survey to ensure a fair representation of views from across our society. In addition, the Government actively sought input from underrepresented groups and held focus groups to ensure that the perspectives of people from ethnic minority backgrounds, male victims, refugee and migrant women experts, deaf and disabled VAWG experts and others were heard. Based on the responses, the strategies set out the Government's ambition to reduce the prevalence of all VAWG crimes, regardless of whom they affect, and to support all victims.

There are over 100 commitments across both documents which cover twelve government departments and six arm's length bodies, working together to implement the strategies. The commitments are implemented at national and local levels through working collaboratively across government. To date, implementation of over 30% of the commitments has been completed. This includes two phases of a national communications campaign ('Enough') which has reached millions of people across England and Wales (further detail on the campaign are provided in section III.A) and the criminalisation of virginity testing.

The Tackling VAWG Strategy and Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan are clear that the Government's fundamental ambition is to reduce the prevalence of these crimes, and local areas have a key role to play in achieving this aim. To offer a more comprehensive response to domestic abuse across agencies at regional and local levels, the Home Office published updated versions of the [National Statement of Expectations \(NSE\) and accompanying VAWG Commissioning Toolkit](#) in March 2022. The NSE aims to provide clear and consistent guidance for local areas on how to commission effective support services for victims of VAWG.

The landmark Domestic Abuse Act became law in April 2021. The Act provides further protections to the millions of people who experience domestic abuse and strengthens measures to bring perpetrators to justice, as well as transforming the support provided to victims. Good progress is being made, and almost all of the provisions in the Act have been implemented.

Furthermore, the Victims and Prisoners Bill was introduced in Parliament in March 2023. The Bill will implement a Victims Law, reform the parole system and establish an Independent Public Advocate to support victims of a major incident. The Bill will both strengthen public protection and make sure that victims of crime are properly supported.

In **Wales**, the Welsh Government refers to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence ('VAWDASV'). The ground-breaking Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) interprets this as:

- Abuse, meaning physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse.
- Domestic abuse, meaning abuse where the victim of it is or has been associated with the abuser.
- Gender-based violence, which encompasses:
  - violence, threats of violence or harassment arising directly or indirectly from values, beliefs or customs relating to gender or sexual orientation;
  - female genital mutilation;
  - forcing a person (whether by physical force or coercion by threats or other psychological means) to enter into a religious or civil ceremony of marriage (whether or not legally binding); and
  - sexual violence, meaning sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, or threats of violence of a sexual nature.

The current national [VAWDASV strategy](#), 2022–2026, which is the second to be completed under the duty established in the Act, sets out the approach and the objectives that will be delivered, which will, if achieved, contribute to the pursuit of the Act. It covers the period to the end of this current administration in 2026. The strategy will be delivered through a Blueprint

approach, which brings together devolved and non-devolved organisations, as well as strengthening the partnership between public, private and specialist sectors in order to provide an improved and joined up response for victims and survivors.

The Act also created duties on local authorities and health boards in Wales to publish and implement strategies for addressing these issues in local communities. This ensures that tackling violence against women and girls is prioritised across Wales.

In June 2019 the Welsh Government published a set of National Indicators for measuring progress against the national VAWDASV strategy. In order to evaluate the impact of Welsh Government strategy and progress in Wales, it is important that measures which reflect the Welsh Government's whole system approach and the contributions of the full range of its partners are used. For this reason, the Welsh Government will review the National Indicators to ensure they reflect the full partnership and can measure the progress of Wales's public health approach.

Under the Blueprint approach a National Partnership Board has been established to support engagement at national and regional levels. NHS and social services senior leaders are represented on the board and will provide input into the development of the Blueprint approach.

The Wales Sexual Assault Services Programme is an improvement project led by the NHS Executive Wales working with the police and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), and in partnership with the specialist third sector. The programme is driving delivery of child/person centred services to ensure the best outcomes for victims of sexual abuse and violence, with the victim voice at the centre. Delivery of the programme is being overseen by the Wales Sexual Assault Services Assurance and Oversight Board, whose members include the NHS, police, PCCs, third sector providers and the Welsh Government.

Health boards, police forces and PCCs, in partnership with the third sector, have agreed a service model for the delivery of sexual assault referral services in Wales. The model will provide a more integrated service that is driven by the needs of victims and patients – and supports the provision of services that meet clinical, forensic, quality and safety standards and guidance.

In **Scotland**, Equally Safe is the Scottish Government's strategy to prevent and eradicate VAWG, and takes a gendered analysis approach. This strategy is co-owned by the Scottish Government and COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) and involves collaborative working with key partners in the public, private and third sectors. Equally Safe sets out a vision to prevent violence from occurring in the first place, build the capability and capacity of support services, and strengthen the justice response to victims and perpetrators. The Scottish Government [Vision for Justice](#), published in 2022, acknowledges that the current justice system was historically designed by men, for men, and thus does not meet the needs of over half of our society; and that urgent action must therefore be taken to ensure women and children are better served by our approaches to justice.

In **Northern Ireland**, the Department for Communities has made changes to legislation to support victims of domestic violence. The changes apply equally to men and women but are expected to benefit mostly women, as domestic violence occurs most commonly against women. For example, as a result of the Housing Benefit and Universal Credit (Victims of Domestic Abuse and Victims of Modern Slavery) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2022, victims of domestic abuse and modern slavery on housing benefit or universal credit will be able to claim help towards their rental costs, as they will no longer be expected to share accommodation. These groups will be able to claim the higher one-bedroom rate of local housing allowance. It is aimed at people under the age of 35.

In line with commitments made under 'New Decade New Approach', the Northern Ireland Executive agreed to the development and publication of a suite of Social Inclusion Strategies, including a new Gender Equality Strategy (GES). The Strategy is being developed using a co-design approach with involvement from stakeholders representing both the men's and women's sectors. Subject to Executive approval, the GES will aim to tackle gender inequality and address

the barriers that gender stereotypes can present. Steps will be taken to ensure that the GES is appropriately aligned to and complements the new Ending Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy.

The Executive Office commenced work on a NI Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework (EVAWG) in 2022.

Development of the draft Strategic Framework for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls and draft first year action plan is ongoing, and will be issued for public consultation this year, with a view to launching before the end of the year.

The 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy' is currently in place covering the period 2016-23. A new draft 'Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy' was published for consultation on 7 February to cover the period 2023-30. Both cover domestic and sexual abuse (physical and non-physical behaviours) and recognise that anyone can be a victim. This work is led jointly by the Departments of Health and Justice and is overseen by a cross-departmental Strategic Delivery Board with advice and input from a multi-agency Stakeholder Assurance Group which shares best practice, and the voices of those with lived experience and frontline expertise, to inform the strategy's implementation. Seven annual action plans have been delivered during the lifetime of the current strategy. Under the strategy a range of measures have been introduced, including a domestic abuse offence which criminalises a pattern of non-physically abusive behaviour, preparatory work to introduce Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Orders, and funding of key services, including a 24 hour Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline, emergency refuge provision, other accommodation-based services, floating support, advocacy and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) launched their first Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Action Plan in September 2022.

A Cross-Departmental Strategy for ending VAWG – [Supporting Change – a strategy for women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system](#) - was published in March 2022. A Cross-Departmental Strategy for ending VAWG – [Supporting Change – a strategy for women and girls in or at risk of contact with the justice system](#) - was published in March 2022.

**B.** In 2022, the Home Office and wider government committed to over £230 million of funding over the next three years as part of the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan. Furthermore, as part of broader funding across government and in support of victims, the Ministry of Justice will deliver a quadrupling of funding for victim and witness support services by 2024/25, up from £41 million in 2009/10. Funding comes from general taxation.

In **Wales**, the Welsh Government's VAWDASV team funds regional VAWDASV teams and specialist services to provide invaluable and lifesaving support to all victims of VAWDASV. This includes early intervention, preventative and educational support, perpetrator intervention programmes, Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) for high-risk victims, and therapeutic recovery interventions for the ongoing support of those impacted by VAWDASV. This funding ensures that, no matter where a victim lives in Wales, there is a strong public and specialist service ready to help. In 2021-22, the VAWDASV budget was £7.825 million, and in 2022-23 it was £8.006 million. Across Wales, funding for VAWDASV services and support is also administered by the four PCCs and the seven Welsh University Health Boards, alongside Welsh Government funding.

In **Scotland**, the Delivering Equally Safe Fund provides £19 million per year to support 121 projects from 112 organisations that focus on early intervention, prevention and support services. The Victim Centred Approach fund is providing £18.5 million over the period of 2022-25 for specialist advocacy support for survivors of gender-based violence.

In **Northern Ireland**, information is not available to estimate the overall level of financial resources, but funding is provided across the Northern Ireland Executive in relation to the

prevention of domestic and sexual abuse. This is estimated at circa £8 million – £10 million per annum. While there is no dedicated funding source at this juncture for implementation of the Violence Against Women and Girls strategy or other related issues this would be managed as required under mainstream funding. It is not possible to provide separate costs for many of the relevant policies as they all form part of normal business.

**C.** The Government regularly engages with stakeholders on tackling VAWG. In addition to regular meetings between ministers and stakeholders (including NGOs) and between the civil service and these stakeholders, there are routine events which provide an opportunity to engage with the sector:

- A bi-annual Home Office-led ministerial meeting with stakeholders across the VAWG sector on emerging challenges and stakeholders' priorities for the upcoming year.
- A quarterly Home Office-led meeting with stakeholders across the VAWG sector, chaired by senior officials, to update on government activity and highlight positive work being done by stakeholders in the VAWG sector.
- The Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation National Expert Steering Group, which is attended by local government, PCCs, specialist domestic abuse service providers and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC). This relates to implementation of the new duty on local authorities, within the Domestic Abuse Act, to ensure victims of domestic abuse and their children have access to the right accommodation-based support when they need it. The DAC also attends the VAWG Ministerial Steering Group, which comprises ministers representing government departments responsible for implementing the Tackling VAWG Strategy and Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 establishes in law the office of the DAC, who is tasked with encouraging good practice in preventing domestic abuse; identifying victims and survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse, as well as children affected by domestic abuse; and improving the protection and provision of support to people affected by domestic abuse. The Government regularly engages with the DAC to understand priorities, challenges and emerging issues at both national and regional/local levels.

In **Wales**, in line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Welsh Government has adopted a collaborative approach to developing and delivering the current VAWDASV national strategy. In December 2021, the Minister for Social Justice published a consultation for the draft strategy, to ensure it provided an opportunity for Welsh Government and partners in the public, private and third sectors to come together to take action to tackle VAWDASV collaboratively. Partners and stakeholders in Wales were invited to provide ideas, suggestions and commitment to the delivery of change for Wales. In implementing this strategy, the Welsh Government will continue to work collaboratively through the Blueprint approach, as well as involving all stakeholders. Service solutions will be co-produced wherever possible, building on the strengths of survivors and perpetrators and involvement will be key to the design of the Blueprint governance structure.

Two experienced officers have also recently been recruited from the specialist violence against women sector into the Welsh Government VAWDASV policy team for a two-year period, to ensure specialist knowledge is integrated into VAWDASV policy development and delivery.

The VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on local authorities and local health boards in Wales to jointly prepare a strategy that specifies objectives which they will deliver to contribute to the fulfilment of the Act. Statutory guidance for the commissioning of VAWDASV services in Wales promotes high quality collaborative commissioning to support the delivery of more consistent and effective services. The expectation is that regional partnerships will invite specified bodies to participate in their activities, including the Chief Constable of the police force for a police area, the PCC for a police area, Probation services and at least one body that represents VAWDASV specialist services in the region.

In **Scotland**, the Equally Safe strategy aims to foster collaborative working between partners across society, and NGOs are recognised and acknowledged as core to this. In addition to the significant funding to civil society actors outlined above, the Scottish Government's NGO

partners are represented on the Joint Strategic Board which oversees the direction and delivery of the strategy.

In **Northern Ireland**, the co-design process used to develop the Gender Equality Strategy has been made up of a targeted group of stakeholders, including NGOs and a wide cross-section of civil society, together with key women's and men's organisations, women with lived experience, intersectional groups and public sector representatives.

As part of the Call for Views (2022) engagement and co-design process from 2022-23, the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) team have engaged with a wide range of organisations and sectors. These included NGOs and a wide cross-section of civil society, together with key women's organisations, women with lived experience, intersectional groups and public sector representatives. The Northern Ireland Executive will continue this engagement as the EVAWG Strategic Framework develops.

**D.** The Government has designated the Home Office both as the body for co-ordination and implementation of measures related to the Convention, and monitoring and evaluation thereof. Information about the Home Office can be found [here](#).

**E.1.** The Office for National Statistics publishes [quarterly data](#) on the number of crimes recorded by police forces in England and Wales. The bulletin outlines key trends in a number of crime types recorded by the police, including domestic abuse and sexual offences. In addition, the Home Office publishes data related to outcomes of investigations into recorded crime on a quarterly basis, found [here](#).

Since January 2020 the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has published [quarterly bulletins](#) of data tables and summaries of main trends on a range of offence types as part of its ongoing commitment to transparency on prosecution performance. The bulletins contain performance information relating to overall prosecution figures and police referrals as well as charging rates in a range of offence types including domestic abuse and rape.

**E.2.** Data from police forces can be disaggregated by crime type and geographical location (as per the territorial police force). Published data is not available by sex, age, relationship, or other characteristics.

The annual data publication provides the volumes of prosecutions and outcomes by the defendants' protected characteristics of sex, age and ethnicity.

**E.3.** Data is collated by the Home Office and published at national and regional levels by the Home Office and Office for National Statistics on a quarterly basis.

The Ministry of Justice, in partnership with criminal justice agencies, collates and publishes data on adult rape in the Criminal Justice System Delivery Data Dashboard. This data is published on a quarterly basis on a national and local level, broken down into Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) area, Police Force Area and CPS Area.

**F.** Through the Domestic Abuse Plan the Government aims to invest up to £75 million over three years to tackle perpetrators, including evaluation and further research to continue to build its understanding of 'what works'. The Home Office has already awarded over £2 million to various research projects over the last two years.

In the Tackling VAWG Strategy the Government committed to invest £3 million to better understand what works to prevent VAWG: to invest in high-quality, evidence-informed prevention projects, including in schools, aiming to educate and inform children and young people about VAWG, healthy relationships and the consequences of abuse. In 2022 the Government ran an open competition through which five organisations secured multi-year funding to deliver this work, with a total of £6.6 million to be allocated over three years.

In January 2023 the Government launched the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Fund which will be delivered within the total budget of £36,290,000 over two years (up to 31 March 2025). This will award grant funding to PCC to support the delivery of interventions for domestic abuse and stalking perpetrators, for example behaviour change programmes. The aim of the fund is to improve the safety, and feeling of safety, of victims and their children, by reducing the risk posed by perpetrators while also better establishing what works to manage offenders and drive down recidivism. Successful organisations began mobilising on 1 April 2023 – details of the projects being funded can be found [here](#).

The Government Equalities Office ran a nationally representative survey on sexual harassment to further develop its understanding of the problem and its extent. The results of this were published in 2021 and provide evidence on the prevalence and nature of harassment.

In **Scotland**, since 2020, the Scottish Government has prioritised and undertaken a wide and varied range of research to support this important work. This has included research during the pandemic on the impacts of lockdowns on VAWG; research to support policy development on addressing misogynistic behaviour; monitoring the effectiveness of domestic abuse legislation; evidence gathering exercises on prevention strategies and international models; and research on sexual exploitation and the purchase of sex. Further work is planned for 2023, building on the considerations of the Women in Justice Leadership Panel which is scheduled to report before the Summer [Women's Justice Leadership Panel - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#). Key publications are available [here](#).

In **Northern Ireland**, in 2022, the Executive Office commissioned the following research which is nearing completion:

- Lagdon, S; Owczarek, M (and others), Every Voice Matters (2022, Ulster University)
- McAlister, S; Neill, G (and others), It's just what happens: Girls and young women's views and experiences of violence (2022, Queens University Belfast)
- Hall, L; Harris, L (and others), A systematic review of effective legal and policy responses to VAWG (2022, University of Lincoln)
- Ruxton, A; Burrell S, The relationship between masculinity and violence against women and girls (2022, Durham University)
- Ellis, A; Harris L, The relationship between trauma and violence against women and girls (2022, University of Lincoln)

In addition to the above, specific VAWG questions were included in the 2022 Young Life and Times Survey.

**G.** The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) interviews approximately 35,000 people living in private households across England and Wales every year about their experiences and perceptions of crime. Please see the [User guide to crime statistics](#).

In the face-to-face mode questions are asked to ascertain respondents' experience of violent crime:

**CSEW violent crime** is categorised by offence type and according to the victim-offender relationship. CSEW offence types include wounding, assault with minor injury and violence without injury (estimates for wounding, assault with minor injury and violence without injury, add up to overall violence). The categories of CSEW violence according to the offender-victim relationship are as follows:

**“domestic violence”** (wounding and assaults that involve partners, ex-partners, other relatives or household members);

**“stranger violence”** (where the victim did not have any information about the offender(s), or did not know and had never seen the offender(s) before); and

**“acquaintance violence”** (where the victim knew one or more of the offenders, at least by sight, but domestic violence was not involved).



In the self-completion module questions are asked about domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking.

### **Domestic abuse**

Domestic abuse in the CSEW combines the following different types of abuse carried out by a current or former partner or other family member:

- **non-sexual abuse by a partner:** physical force, emotional or financial abuse, or threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to them, carried out by a current or former partner;
- **non-sexual abuse by a family member** (other than a partner – e.g. father or mother, step-father, step-mother or other relative);
- **sexual assault carried out by a partner or other family member:** rape or assault by penetration including attempts, or indecent exposure or unwanted touching carried out by a current or former partner or other family member; and
- **stalking carried out by a partner or other family member:** two or more incidents (causing distress, fear or alarm) of receiving obscene or threatening unwanted letters, e-mails, text messages or phone calls; having had obscene or threatening information about them placed on the internet; waiting or loitering around the home or workplace; or following or watching by any person, including a current or former partner or family member.

### **Sexual assault**

**Non-contact sexual abuse** is defined as where the respondent indicated that someone made them watch or listen to sexual acts or look at sexual images; made or shared sexual images of them; deliberately exposed themselves to them or sent them sexual images or videos of themselves or others.

The following are sub-categories of the “**contact sexual abuse**” category:

- **rape or assault by penetration**, including attempts; this includes penetration with any object
- **other contact sexual abuse**; this includes being touched sexually (for example, groping, touching of breasts or bottom, and kissing) or being forced into touching someone else’s body for sexual purposes.

The CSEW covers England and Wales only. Estimates are also provided at the regional level but sample sizes mean that estimates below regional level are not available.

CSEW estimates for violence are published on a quarterly basis in the Crime in England and Wales bulletins. Estimates for domestic abuse and sexual assault are published on an annual basis. The latest estimates for the year ending September 2022 show that there were 1.1 million CSEW violent crime incidents. The CSEW estimated that 5.0% of adults aged 16 years and over had experienced domestic abuse, and 2.3% had experienced sexual assault, in the year ending March 2022. Estimates for prevalence of CSEW violence, domestic abuse and sexual assault disaggregated by sex, age, type of violence, relationship to perpetrator and region can be found in the publications below:

Crime in England and Wales publication:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingseptember2022>

Domestic abuse overview:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesoverview/november2022>

Sexual offences overview:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/sexualoffencesinenglandandwalesoverview/march2022>

Nature of violent crime in England and Wales:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/thenatureofviolentcrimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2022>

In **Scotland**, the Scottish Government runs the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS), an annual large-scale, population-based social survey which asks people about their experiences

and perceptions of crime in Scotland. The SCJS enables both estimates and prevalence of crime in Scotland to be reported.

The survey contains a number of specific topics – the most relevant for researching violence against women are violent crime, harassment, stalking, partner abuse and sexual victimisation. The more recent published results, from 2019/20, are available [here](#). Key findings include:

- 3.6% of adults in Scotland have experienced at least one type of serious sexual assault since the age of 16. A greater proportion of women than men have experienced serious sexual assault both since the age of 16 (6.1% compared with 0.8%) and in the 12 months prior to interview (0.4% compared with 0.1%).
- Since the age of 16, women were almost twice as likely as men to have experienced partner abuse (21.2% and 11.2% respectively).
- Almost one in eight adults (11.8%) experienced at least one type of stalking and harassment in the year prior to interview, unchanged from 2016/18. Over the same period 6.1% experienced more than one type. The survey found no difference in the proportion of men and women experiencing stalking and harassment in the 12 months prior to interview (11.4% and 12.1%, respectively).
- Men were more likely to experience violent crime, as well as people in the 15% most deprived areas of Scotland, and those living in urban locations.

Due to Covid-19 and the resulting public health measures, the survey was suspended in March 2020 and not re-started until regulations allowed in November 2021. Results from this latest run of the survey will be published on the Scottish Government [website](#) in late 2023.

The **Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (NISCS)** is a representative, continuous, personal interview survey of the experiences and perceptions of crime of approximately 4,000 adults living in private households throughout Northern Ireland. Commissioned by the Department of Justice (DoJ), it is undertaken by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's (NISRA) Central Survey Unit (CSU). Findings are publicly available on the DoJ website.

As a result of the pandemic, interviews for the survey years from 2020/21 onwards have been carried out via telephone (traditionally interviews were conducted face-to-face). The move to telephone has meant that self-completion modules have not been asked since 2020/21 as the privacy and confidentiality of respondents cannot be maintained using telephone mode. This includes the biennial Experience of Domestic Abuse module. The DoJ is currently working with the CSU regarding the potential for an alternative survey method that may enable this information to be captured.

Prisoner Needs Profiles (PNP) held on the Northern Ireland Prison Service's PRISM system were completed by 105 female prisoners and present the following picture:

- 64.35% (74) experienced domestic abuse.
- 53.91% (62) experienced sexual abuse/violence.
- 09.57% (11) have been involved in sex work.
- 04.35% (5) have been hurt because of sex work.
- 03.48% (4) were forced into sex work.
- 06.09% (7) started sex work by their own choice.
- 06.96% (8) experienced sexual exploitation.
- 04.35% (5) were hurt because of sexual exploitation.

PNP data within PRISM is self-reported and responses are not verified by staff.

### **III. Prevention**

**A.** In the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, the Government committed to running a national communications campaign. The 'Enough' campaign focuses on targeting perpetrators, educating young people about healthy relationships and ensuring victims of VAWG

can access support. The campaign aims to raise awareness of different types of VAWG including controlling and coercive behaviour.

The first phase of the campaign launched in March 2022 to target and challenge the harmful behaviours that exist within wider society, educate young people about healthy relationships and consent, and ensure victims can recognise abuse and receive support. The second wave of the campaign focuses on the range of safe ways a bystander can safely intervene if they witness VAWG, to help tackle barriers to intervening and prompt action.

The Government and statutory authorities have also run specific campaigns, for example the Home Office's campaign to raise awareness of forced marriage and FGM (in 2018-19) and NHS England's campaign this year to raise awareness of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs).

In **Wales**, to raise awareness of all forms of VAWDASV, the Welsh Government delivers campaigns through the 'Live Fear Free' programme of work. The Welsh Government continues to raise awareness of stalking, harassment, abuse and violence against women in all aspects of life including the workplace, recreation venues, the street and other public places. These campaigns provide practical advice for those who may be suffering abuse as well as highlighting the support available to enable friends, family and the wider community to recognise abuse and take safe action. There were over 20,800 visits to the [Live Fear Free website](#) during the period 2020-2021

The Live Fear Free 'Call Out Only' campaign ran between December 2021 and May 2022, calling on the public to call out and challenge assumptions about harassment against women. The campaign aimed to help people identify behaviours associated with street harassment and acknowledged that the experiences of women and girls are serious and prevalent and can cause fear, alarm and distress. It was supported by the specialist VAWDASV sector in Wales. The campaign generated over 6.8 million impressions, and over 20,000 views of the campaign website. During the campaign period contacts to the Live Fear Free helpline increased by 15%. The campaign was successful in raising awareness amongst those who perpetrate abuse or are concerned about their behaviour. The Live Fear Free helpline saw an increase of 1,267% in contacts from perpetrators, and the charity Respect (the main signposting option of the campaign) saw an increase of 69% to their "Change that lasts" website.

In addition, £30,000 in funding was distributed to regional coordinators for community awareness raising campaigns and activity. There have also been a number of written statements from Welsh Ministers regarding women's safety in Wales, and the NHS Wales Executive has developed materials and a media campaign to explain the process when accessing services at SARCs, and promote the wrap-around support available.

In **Scotland**, the Scottish Government works with partners to build recognition of its policies and initiatives, including participating annually in the 16 Days of Activism through a range of social media and other activity. In 2020 it relaunched the [Domestic Abuse campaign](#) and supported Police Scotland's [Don't Be That Guy](#) campaign.

In **Northern Ireland**, the Department of Health promoted campaigns taken forward by delivery partners including the regional Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline, the Department of Justice and the PSNI. Cross government awareness raising also took place during the 16 Days of Action.

The Executive Office (TEO) produced the Active Bystander Conference in June 2022 to promote the social bystander model as an intervention to be used when challenging behaviours such as harassment.

Multimedia advertising campaigns took place between 2018 and 2023, to raise awareness of domestic abuse, highlight support services available and encourage reporting.

The Department of Justice also launched a digital and radio awareness campaign for a new stalking offence. The campaign ran from 26 September 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The PSNI has undertaken a number of campaigns during the last six months including the launch of the PSNI Violence Against Women and Girls action plan, Ask for Angela, and Operation Encompass<sup>4</sup>. There are further media campaigns planned in coming months to focus on stalking awareness and matters related to online harms.

**B.** In September 2020 relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) became a statutory part of the school curriculum. As part of Relationships Education, children will be taught about the importance of respectful relationships and the different types of loving and healthy relationships that exist. Domestic abuse, FGM, forced marriage, rape, harassment and abuse are explicitly taught about in the 'Being Safe' topic. To support teachers to deliver these topics safely and with confidence the Department for Education has produced RSHE [Teacher Training Modules](#).

The department has also delivered teacher webinars on domestic abuse, pornography and sexual exploitation. They are currently working on guidance for schools on teaching about sexual harassment and sexual violence which they anticipate will be published in 2024, alongside revised statutory guidance.

The Curriculum for **Wales** was rolled out in schools from September 2022. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a statutory requirement in the Curriculum for Wales framework and is mandatory for all learners from age 3-16. RSE has a positive and protective role in learners' education and will support learners to understand and discuss their rights, and the rights of others. The RSE Code and statutory guidance were published in January 2022.

The Welsh Government's VAWDASV strategy will run alongside the new RSE Code and the statutory guidance and underpins learners' rights to enjoy fulfilling, healthy and safe relationships throughout their lives.

The Welsh Government and Higher Education Funding Council for Wales developed guidance on VAWDASV for Welsh universities. This guidance was published in March 2020.

The Welsh Government works closely with third sector VAWDASV specialist providers to create and disseminate a range of factsheets on VAWDASV issues faced by children. These will be disseminated through the school network and the Wales Safeguarding Boards.

In **Scotland**, the Scottish Government is committed to ensuring all pupils receive high-quality relationships, sexual health and parenthood (RSHP) education. RSHP education supports pupils to learn about safe and healthy relationships and it is for schools to decide how they deliver it, based on the needs of the pupils in their classroom.

Additionally the Mentors in Violence Prevention Programme tackles gender stereotyping and attitudes condoning VAWG, Equally Safe at School tackles gender based violence and the Gender Based Violence in Schools Working Group is developing a national framework to ensure consistent messaging on gender-based harassment in schools.

In Scotland, colleges and universities are autonomous bodies with responsibility for internal institutional matters, such as course provision and the setting of course content, in which the Scottish Government does not intervene. However, the Scottish Government has established the Equally Safe in Colleges and Universities (ESCU) Core Leadership Group to bring together the sector to more effectively tackle gender-based violence.

Within the **Northern Ireland** curriculum pupils in primary school (ages 4-11) have opportunities to explore and gain an understanding of relationships including their responsibilities for themselves and others, how to respond to conflict and how to live as a member of the community. In post-

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<sup>4</sup> This is a scheme (in place in England and being rolled out in Northern Ireland) which enables the police to report to schools before the start of the next school day when a child or young person has been involved in or exposed to a domestic abuse incident the previous evening (so that they can access support).

primary school pupils have the opportunity to explore the qualities of respectful relationships, develop coping strategies to deal with challenging relationship scenarios and avoid and resolve conflict.

The teaching of relationship and sexuality education (RSE) is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age. All grant-aided schools are required to have a RSE policy that is based on consultation with parents and pupils. It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors of each school to ensure that a comprehensive programme is delivered which meets the needs of its pupils and aligns with its RSE policy.

The statutory curriculum for personal development and mutual understanding at primary level, and the personal development strand of the learning for life and work area of learning at post-primary level, includes high level prescribed content for RSE at each key stage; this is the minimum entitlement that all young people must legally receive. Beyond this, teachers are expected to 'provide a balance of experiences' drawn from a list of examples prepared by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).

On 6 June, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland laid Regulations which amend the Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007 to make "age-appropriate, comprehensive and scientifically accurate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, covering prevention of early pregnancy and access to abortion" a mandatory element of the curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4. This ensures that the Secretary of State has met his duty in respect of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) recommendations. The Regulations also place a duty on the Education Department to produce guidance for schools by 1 January 2024 and to make regulations which will enable parents to request that their child be excused from lessons dealing with all or some of the CEDAW recommendations.

[CCEA's online RSE Hub](#) provides a central repository of age-appropriate information and guidance on a range of topics aimed at providing teachers with the resources and support to increase their competence and confidence in delivering RSE. CCEA has published a RSE Progression Framework which will be kept under review and will be responsive to the Education and Training Inspectorate's thematic evaluation of safeguarding and the preventative and RSE curriculum - The Preventative Curriculum in Schools and EOTAS Centres | Education Training Inspectorate ([etini.gov.uk](http://etini.gov.uk)) and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's investigation into RSE. A policy response to the findings is being considered by the Northern Ireland Education Department.

**C.** Social work is a graduate entry profession regulated by Social Work England (SWE), who set out the professional standards a social worker must know, understand and be able to put into effect. Additionally, SWE has implemented new, tougher, education and training standards and is assessing and approving all social work education and training courses against those standards. Within the curriculum, students develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to meet the standards and to work effectively. Social workers spend time developing their practice; this includes working with safeguarding partners such as police and healthcare staff in assessing risks and decision making in relation to violence against women and domestic abuse.

All asylum decision makers complete the Foundation Training Programme (FTP). This is a four week programme which consists of a three week decision-making course as well as a one week interview course. VAWG is addressed throughout the programme as a basis of considering a claim for asylum as well as subsidiary leave. There is a range of specific modules which specifically address this issue, such as 'Considering Modern Slavery in the Asylum Claim especially from the experiences of women and girls'.

The National Training Framework in **Wales** is made up of six groups. All professionals within the public service will fall into one of these groups and a minimum training requirement is outlined per group. The data is not segmented into type of professional, so Table 1 has not been completed.

In **Scotland**, NHS Education for Scotland (NES) is responsible for developing and delivering healthcare education and training for the NHS, health and social care sector and other public bodies. NHS staff have access to national training e-modules and a number of [Gender-based Violence guidance documents](#) from Public Health Scotland and the Scottish Government.

Capacity and resource to deliver and attend training varies across local NHS boards, therefore the frequency of and mandatory requirements to attend training is not consistent and are decided at the local level.

The Scottish Government fund Scottish Women's Aid to develop Equally Safe in Practice, a model to increase capacity for training on gender-based violence and the norms and cultures that perpetuate it for organisations across Scotland.

The Scottish Government does not hold data, so Table 1 and 2 has incomplete data. They will undergo a review of their data processes to understand how they can collate this data.

**D.** Local authorities are responsible for developing their workforces including social workers. To support child and family social workers to continuously improve their practice, the Department for Education (DfE) has developed the Post Qualifying Standards for child and family social work, which set out the skills, knowledge and behaviours social workers need to protect vulnerable children and families. Knowledge and Skills Statement Four specifically refers to what social workers need to be able to do in relation to domestic abuse. To help ensure social workers meet the standards, DfE also funds high-quality national leadership and professional development programmes. Each year an average of 800 new child and family social workers are trained through its fast-track programmes, and professional development is provided for around 4,000 others. The new Early Career Framework will significantly extend the training and support social workers receive in the early stages of their career, helping to equip them with the knowledge skills they need to support children and families. Social workers continue to develop their skills and knowledge through professional development.

In November 2022 the Ministry of Defence introduced mandatory awareness training on unacceptable sexual behaviours to the whole force, some 140,000 serving personnel. This training covers consent, what unacceptable sexual behaviour is, the consequences of it and the responsibility for challenging it. The training is followed by an assessment of understanding.

Servicemen and service women working in welfare and policing roles undertake further role-specific training on sexual violence and domestic abuse in line with that required by Article 15. Additionally, at certain career points and at certain ranks, further education, and awareness about issues such as sexual offences and domestic abuse is provided. Defence Whole force policy on domestic abuse gives further guidance on training<sup>5</sup> and encourages multi-agency training.

The Government does not provide input into or have responsibility for judicial training; for reasons of judicial independence, the Lord Chief Justice (LCJ), has statutory responsibility for the training of judges and magistrates, which he exercises through the Judicial College. Training about domestic abuse for judges is included in family law and criminal courses run by the Judicial College. All judges must complete their induction training before they can hear such cases. Domestic abuse is then also covered in ongoing continuation training.

The training reflects the wide-ranging nature of domestic abuse and covers all areas recognised by the Government as abuse, including sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and coercive and controlling behaviour (including financial coercion and control). Training is kept under constant review and is regularly updated to reflect the latest developments. Updated digital training was launched in Autumn 2021, and updated face-to-face training rolled out from April 2022.

All National Health Service (NHS) staff undertake mandatory safeguarding training which includes a focus on domestic abuse. NHS England continues to review mandatory safeguarding training for all

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<sup>5</sup> [JSP913 Part2.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

health professionals to ensure that they are fully equipped with the key skills, knowledge and principles to protect all individuals. Professionals who receive initial training (education or professional training) as required by Article 15(3) include front-line health professionals, SARC professionals and professionals involved in wider sexual assault and abuse pathways. Records on initial training are not held centrally. A range of providers, both NHS and private, across England, are responsible for holding and maintaining their own training records.

In **Wales**, the National Training Framework is made up of [six groups](#), covering all public service professions, with a minimum training requirement for each group. Over 173,200 public sector professionals have been trained through the National Training Framework. The data is not segmented into type of professional, so Table 2 has not been completed. The Framework will be undergoing a review in 2023.

The Welsh Government has provided guidance and training to practitioners on the exercise of the duty to report people at risk of abuse, and on the use of Adult Protection and Support Orders. Over 67,000 individuals have accessed the VAWDASV online e-learning module since 9 April 2020.

The Welsh Government's approach to early intervention has seen continued roll out of Ask and Act, a policy and training programme which upskills key public service workers to undertake targeted enquiry to identify abuse. By March 2022, a total of 17,600 workers had been trained to 'Ask and Act', including 5,220 during the 2021 to 2022 reporting period.

In **Scotland**, please see question C, above.

In **Northern Ireland**, in The Executive Office (TEO), 32 staff received Bystander Approach training in the context of ending violence against women, covering unacceptable behaviours and what everyone can actively do.

Within the PSNI considerable training has been undertaken to better understand and support VAWG-related offences including domestic abuse, stalking and CSE in the last 12 months. This has included training into coercive or controlling behaviour and understanding the barriers to reporting, as well as the impact of domestic abuse from a victim-centred approach. This four module training package has been completed by c.6,500 people across the organisation, and a similar stalking module has been undertaken by 4,600 people. PSNI across the organisation. PSNI is in the final stages of launching a training package to support the introduction of non-fatal strangulation and rape myths and organisational cultural change.

**E.** Over the last three years the UK Home Office has awarded over £41 million to increase the availability of non-statutory interventions for domestic abuse and stalking perpetrators, in order to improve the safety of victims and their children and reduce the risk posed by perpetrators. Earlier this year, a competition was launched for a further iteration of funding for these interventions, worth up to £39 million over 2023-25, which was open to PCCs working with local delivery partners. The ambition of this competition was to identify and fund best-in-class projects that both deliver on this aim whilst also better establishing what works to tackle perpetrators' behaviour and drive down recidivism.

This funding [has now been allocated](#) to 27 PCCs across England and Wales to deliver mostly voluntary and non-statutory interventions in their areas, totalling 50 separate projects being funded by central Government. These projects are varied and include, for example, multi-agency intensive case management which is typically used to disrupt high-harm, high-risk perpetrators or longer-term behaviour change programmes (usually delivered in group sessions). Prioritising the safety of victims and any relevant children was a key area of consideration in determining successful bids and all projects are expected to have accompanying specialist support for victims. Non-statutory interventions for domestic abuse perpetrators are also funded through other means including through PCCs and local authorities. In order to build on the existing evidence base, an independent evaluation partner has been appointed to assess the 2023-25 funded interventions on their feasibility for process, impact, and cost benefit evaluations, producing evaluation proposals for each recommended intervention.

The Government is clear that abusive behaviour needs to be tackled directly with perpetrators of abuse in a way that prioritises the safety of those they abuse, and their children. This is why, working with the University of Durham, the Government has developed a set of [Government Standards](#) that sets out its minimum expectations in terms of quality for perpetrator interventions. The Government Standards will be a guidance tool for those who commission perpetrator interventions. The Standards include seven principles with underlying practice guidelines. Example principles include that the priority outcome should be enhanced safety and freedom for victim-survivors and children and the need to deliver the right intervention to the right people at the right time. The Government will work closely with PCCs to promote the use of the Standards. These standards apply to the 50 projects now being funded; together with the information about the projects contained in the [announcement](#), they should provide the remaining information requested in the question.

A number of NHS Trusts across England have begun to develop perpetrator interventions and pathways as part of their response to VAWG. NHS England continues to undertake work to understand the availability of these provisions across the country and to support the development of best practice models and further roll out.

His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) provides a comprehensive range of programmes to meet the needs of those convicted of domestic abuse related offences. The current range of programmes is designed to be consistent with the principles of risk, need and responsivity. Therefore, for individuals who are medium-risk and above higher intensity interventions such as accredited programmes are provided, and for lower-risk individuals toolkits for probation practitioners to use are provided. Specifically, HMPPS Interventions Services offer six Accredited Programmes which address the risk and need of those convicted of intimate partner violence (IPV): Building Better Relationships, Kaizen, Becoming New Me, New Me Strengths, Living as New Me, and a consolidation toolkit New Me MOT. HMPPS accredited programmes are available to prisons and probation services across England and Wales.

HMPPS Accredited Programmes are designed and informed by evidence of what works to reduce re-offending. This includes evidence relating to the experience and needs of women who have been victims of intimate partner abuse. The accredited programmes are scrutinised by the Correctional Services Advice & Accreditation Panel (CSAAP). CSAAP helps HMPPS to accredit programmes by reviewing programme design, quality assurance procedures and findings, and programme evaluations. For more information about CSAAP please use the following link: [Offending Behaviour Programmes and Interventions page](#)

Those who undertake HMPPS Accredited Programmes must provide consent to do so. This action is taken as part of the mandatory requirement to undertake an accredited programme as part of a community-based Order or Licence condition, upon release from prison. Failure to comply can result in a breach of the court Order or Licence requirement.

Domestic Abuse Safety Officers (DASO) are available to partners or victims of men participating on the Accredited Building Better Relationship Programme or IPV-specific structured interventions. DASOs provide emotional support and advocacy to victims, and assess and manage the risk and safeguarding of their clients and their children.

HMPPS does not disaggregate spend on domestic abuse offending programmes from the overall spend on all its programme delivery, hence this information cannot be provided.

In **Wales**, the Welsh Government funds nine perpetrator programmes, spanning across Wales. These programmes cut across a range of risk levels. In addition to Welsh Government funding, other programmes across Wales are funded by the four PCC offices, as well as through grant funding by local authorities. All services are domestic abuse perpetrator focused; currently none of these programmes focus on sexual violence. The regions report both quarterly and annually with a focus on spend and key performance indicators for each service. Across Wales, the total amount spent for perpetrator services and programme interventions (excluding programmes delivered by HMPPS) is £1.5 million.



There is a multi-agency VAWDASV workstream of the 'Framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales' 2018-2023.

Identifying VAWDASV at the earliest opportunity and providing an appropriate response to minimise impact and harm is critical in achieving the early intervention and prevention objective of the National Strategy.

The Welsh Government commissioned a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) during 2020 to 2021 to better understand how to communicate effectively with perpetrators of domestic abuse and those who are beginning to display these harmful behaviours and how this can inform media campaigns targeting these cohorts. The findings were published by the British Psychological Society (BPS).

In **Scotland**, the Scottish Government have policy responsibility for and sponsor the Caledonian Programme, Scotland's largest rehabilitation programme for domestic abuse perpetrators and their victims. The Caledonian System is an accredited intervention programme delivered to men convicted of domestic abuse, with services for women and children who have been victims. 19 Scottish local authority areas deliver the Caledonian System on a court mandated basis. It is currently a community-based programme, primarily delivered by justice social workers but with some third sector providers involved in the delivery of the programme. It is not currently delivered in custody but other programmes which target violence are delivered by the Scottish Prison Service.

The female victims of the male perpetrators are offered a support service within the Caledonian System. The services for women involve provision of safety planning, information, advice and emotional support by dedicated women's workers who aim to reduce the risk to women and their children and improve their social and emotional wellbeing.

The Caledonian System is sponsored by the Scottish Governments Public Protection Unit. The current annual budget is £4.1 million. It adopts a gendered analysis, following the Equally Safe strategy, of understanding and working with domestic abuse perpetrators. The Caledonian System was evaluated and accredited by the Scottish Panel on Offender Rehabilitation (SAPOR) in 2016. SAPOR have approved the Scottish Government's recommendation to implement an outcomes monitoring framework and commission an independent evaluation in two to three years' time (subject to budget).

A range of programmes is delivered to individuals in the **Northern Ireland** Prison Service to support them in changing their behaviour/rehabilitation. Individuals would be assessed in terms of risk, needs and responsivity to ensure that they are allocated to appropriate interventions to meet their risk, needs and responsivity. The programmes include, but are not limited, to:

- Victim Impact Course - This consists of 26 sessions delivered over 13 days, with different topics delivered. There are specific topics covering violence against women and domestic violence.
- Building Better Relationships - This programme is for adult males who have engaged specifically in intimate partner violence either in their current main offences or in the 24 months prior to their current sentence.
- Horizon program – This programme is delivered to men considered to be at a risk of reoffending, who have committed a sexual offence.
- Promoting Positive Relationships Programme - This is a 24-week group programme provided to those displaying concerning behaviour, who have not yet reached the criminal justice system and where children are at risk. Funding of £376,000 is provided annually, with a number of evaluations undertaken.

Participation in any programmes in custody is on a voluntary basis and individuals cannot be mandated to complete them.

**F.** HMPPS provides a comprehensive range of programmes to meet the needs of those convicted of sexual offences. The current range of programmes is designed to be consistent with the principles of risk, need and responsivity. Therefore, for individuals who are medium-risk and above higher intensity interventions such as accredited programmes are provided, and for lower-risk individuals

toolkits for probation practitioners to use are provided. HMPPS is also working with external organisations to provide complementary services, specifically Circles of Support and Accountability. None of these interventions is intended to be stand-alone, and all would be delivered in the context of a structured sentence plan which may involve risk management and rehabilitative activity consistent with the risk and needs presented by the individual, together with multi-agency working where appropriate.

HMPPS operates eight accredited programmes for men convicted of sexual offences in prisons and probation in England and Wales. These programmes are operated directly by HMPPS. The programmes are based on empirical evidence and structured according to the risk/need/responsivity principles. This means they target differing levels of risk, are based on an up to date understanding of criminogenic need and are responsive to individual needs. An understanding of how and why people desist from sexual offending has been incorporated into programme design. More detail about the programmes can be found [here](#).

All of these programmes and toolkits are designed for adult males aged 18 and above. The prison programmes are voluntary, delivered as part of a person's sentence plan, and attendance in community is mandatory as a condition of a licence or community order. The accredited programmes are delivered in selected prisons nationally, and in probation regions as required. The accredited programmes are scrutinised by the Correctional Services Advice & Accreditation Panel (CSAAP). CSAAP helps HMPPS to accredit programmes by reviewing programme design, quality assurance procedures and findings, and programme evaluations. CSAAP makes recommendations about whether to accredit to HMPPS; HMPPS is accountable for decisions to accredit programmes.

HMPPS also provides 'toolkits' for probation practitioners to assist them in supervising people convicted of sexual offences. A toolkit is a structured set of exercises that practitioners can flexibly draw upon. Maps for Change is a toolkit for probation practitioners for structuring 1:1 supervision when working with men convicted of sexual offences. The toolkit can be used with men who are not eligible or suitable for an accredited programme.

HMPPS programmes are designed to give participants skills and attitudes to help reduce reoffending. This promotes the safety of all potential victims, including women. HMPPS does not disaggregate spend on sexual offending programmes from the overall spend on all its programme delivery therefore this information cannot be provided.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is committed to engaging in impact evaluations of accredited offending behaviour programmes. The general evaluation strategy for these programmes is to examine process, short-term outcomes and impact, with the aim of having a comprehensive understanding of delivery and what works for whom and why. These three different types of evaluation study require different volumes of participants and durations of time to complete. MoJ is committed to publishing evaluation findings and recently published reports for the Healthy Sex Programme, Horizon and i-Horizon can be found [here](#).

In **Scotland**, the Moving Forward: Making Changes (MF:MC) Programme was designed jointly by the Scottish Prison Service and the Scottish Government's Community Justice Operational Practice Unit. MF:MC is an intensive treatment programme for sex offenders which aims to "reduce the re-offending of men convicted of sexual offences and increase their opportunities and capacities for meeting needs by non-offending means". It was delivered within custody in three sites in Scotland, and MF:MC continues to be delivered in 29 Scottish local authorities. The MF:MC aligns with the Equally Safe strategy and the Scottish Government's commitment to preventing and eradicating VAWG by driving initiatives to tackle domestic abuse, to holding perpetrators to account and supporting them to change their behaviour.

A revision called Moving Forward 2 Change (MF2C) has been designed for males aged over 18 who have been convicted of a sexual offence, or a non-sexual offence that contains a sexual element and who have been assessed as medium and high-risk by the Stable and Acute 2007 risk assessment tool. Currently the project is within the design, pilot and evaluation phases. Individuals who complete MF:MC/MF2C are managed within wider risk management systems that consider victim safety planning.

The Self-Change Programme (SCP) is a high-intensity cognitive-behavioural intervention that aims to reduce violence (including general, sexual and intimate partner violence) in high-risk adult male offenders; it is currently being piloted in two sites within the Scottish Prison Service.

The Scottish Prison Service, Community Justice Scotland and local authorities provide a broad range of programmes and interventions, so it is not possible to disaggregate one set of programme costs.

MF2C pilot and SCP pilots are currently being evaluated. Both programmes will be submitted for accreditation to Scottish Accreditation Panel Offender Rehabilitation (SAPOR).

Within the **Northern Ireland** Prison Service (NIPS), the following programmes are available for those who have engaged in sexually harmful behaviour:

- Horizon is predominantly a programme for medium-risk adult males who have engaged in sexually harmful behaviour. High-risk cases can be considered for inclusion where they have been assessed as low-risk in terms of sexual deviance.
- Safer Lives is an approach for working with young adult males who have engaged in sexually harmful behaviour. The same approach is used in both custody and the community, across agencies (Youth Justice Agency, Probation Board for Northern Ireland and NIPS). Assessment and intervention work is undertaken on an individual basis and handovers take place between agencies as the participants move between custody and the community.

**G.** The UK's Online Safety Bill establishes a new regulatory framework to hold companies to account for protecting their users and upholding freedom of expression online. Platforms will need to proactively remove and prevent users from being exposed to priority illegal content, including offences that disproportionately affect women and girls, such as offences relating to sexual images (e.g. revenge and extreme pornography), and controlling or coercive behaviour. Companies will be required to identify and mitigate systemic risks facing women and girls arising from illegal content and activity online.

The Bill will hold the largest platforms accountable for their terms of service. Where a company prohibits types of abuse that disproportionately affect women and girls, or other forms of hate speech, those terms must be enforced with effective user reporting mechanisms. These services will also need to offer adult users optional tools which will give them greater control over content that is abusive, or incites hatred, on the basis of sex. The UK's forthcoming online safety regulator, Ofcom, will publish codes of practice setting out the steps that companies can take to comply with their responsibilities.

Additionally, the UK Government has published principles to promote safer platform design to support companies in understanding how preventative design measures can reduce the risk of harm on their services. It has also commissioned research to understand the impacts of platform design on the risk of online VAWG alongside a review of the existing evidence base for online VAWG. The Government will be publishing, alongside international partners, a set of commitments to address these gaps.

In **Scotland**, the Scottish Government funds 'Close the Gap', to deliver Equally Safe at Work employer accreditation programme to help employers to advance gender equality and prevent VAWG in the workplace. It also funds Close the Gap to deliver a Gender Beacon Collaborative to work with the Scottish Government, the third sector and NHS health boards to meet the standards in the Equally Safe at Work programme.

In the Fair Work Action Plan, the Scottish Government has reaffirmed its commitment to promoting and disseminating learning and good practice to aid employers to address a range of inequalities in the workplace, including sexual harassment at work.

In **Northern Ireland**, although telecommunications is a reserved matter, The Executive Office has met regularly with Ofcom as part of its wider engagement, in particular around online safety.

The Department of Health has published guidelines on media reporting under the 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy', making use of a Responsible Reporting Matters framework.

The South Eastern Domestic Violence Partnership has published guidelines on media reporting under the 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy'.

**H.** Many online platforms operating in the UK have existing policies/terms of service prohibiting hate speech, harassment and abuse on the basis of sex and gender identity. As noted, the UK's Online Safety Bill, once implemented, will ensure online platforms have proportionate systems and processes in place to address illegal content, including illegal VAWG content and other offences which disproportionately affect women and girls, as well as ensuring the largest in-scope platforms are transparent about and accountable for their terms of service.

In **Scotland**, the Scottish Government fund Engender to create [Gender Equal Media Scotland](#) to work for women's equality in Scottish media. The Scottish Government wishes to see a Scottish media which treats women equally – as employees, as contributors and as subjects of media attention.

In relation to **Northern Ireland**, please see question G, above.

**I.** Employers play a key role in supporting victims of, and preventing, VAWG.

In supporting victims of domestic abuse specifically, the Government highlighted the important role of employers in the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan, published in March 2022. The Government called on more organisations to join organisations such as the Employers Domestic Abuse Covenant (EDAC) and Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA).

EIDA is a business network which empowers employers to take action against domestic abuse, for their staff, and their sectors. It brings together the experience, expertise and best practice of its members and partners to tackle abuse and raise awareness. Membership is free to any employer wanting to act. The network provides practical guidance, up to date tools and materials, as well as signposting to support services.

EDAC helps businesses support women affected by abuse to enter or re-enter the workplace. Employers are invited to sign the Covenant and identify sustainable workplace skills and opportunities, or to pledge to raise awareness of domestic abuse within the workplace by encouraging meaningful conversations and enhancing recruitment practices, and to encourage other organisations to get involved.

In 2020 the Equality and Human Rights Commission [published guidance](#) for employers on dealing with sexual harassment and harassment at work. This provides a legal explanation and practical examples of how to tackle and respond effectively to harassment. It wrote to large employers across Great Britain, reminding them of their duty of care and asking them to take preventative steps to safeguard their employees from harassment.

In March 2022, the UK ratified the International Labour Organization's Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190), becoming the eleventh country in the world, and the third country in Europe, to do so. Convention No. 190 is a landmark instrument. It is the first international labour standard to address violence and harassment in the world of work.

In **Wales**, experiences of harassment at work are far too common for women and girls. These experiences are also heightened for LGBTQ+ women, for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women and for disabled women. The Welsh Government's Programme for Government commits to strengthening the VAWDASV Strategy to include a specific focus on workplace harassment.

The Strategy will be delivered through a collaborative Blueprint approach with a specific workstream on workplace harassment. This approach strengthens the partnership between public, private and specialist sectors to tackle this issue head-on and ensure that workplaces are safe, respectful and inclusive for all employees.

The **Scottish** Government's Fair Work First approach involves the application of fair work criteria to public sector grants, other funding and contracts where it is relevant to do so. This includes key criteria for recipient organisations to 'take action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace'. The updated [Fair Work First Guidance](#) provides good practice examples to guide employers' approaches such as recognising that female employees can be living through difficult personal circumstances which could include experiencing domestic abuse (or other forms of VAWG), or moving on from commercial sexual exploitation. It also provides guidance for employers to align policies and practice with the [Equally Safe](#) strategy and to gain the [Equally Safe at Work](#) accreditation to prevent workplace harassment.

In March 2022, the **Northern Ireland** Assembly passed the Domestic Abuse (Safe Leave) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. Once commenced, this will place a requirement on the Department for the Economy (DfE) to make regulations which will provide at least ten days' paid leave in each leave year for workers/employees who are victims/survivors of domestic abuse. Statutory obligations will include a requirement to provide guidance on these regulations. In addition, in 2022 the Labour Relations Agency (an arm's length body of the DfE responsible for promoting the improvement of employment relations), in conjunction with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions – Northern Ireland Committee, published a 'Safe at Work, Safe at Home Guide', aimed at assisting employers and trade unions to navigate issues associated with domestic violence and abuse in the workplace.

The DfE issued a Statement of Expectations to the Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), providing a set of recommendations to help Northern Ireland's universities develop and implement effective systems, policies and processes to prevent and respond to incidents of harassment and sexual misconduct. The principle underpinning the statement is that all higher education students registered at one of Northern Ireland's universities should be protected from harassment and sexual misconduct from other students, staff and visitors.

Under the 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy', the Departments of Health and Justice jointly published Guidance for Employers on how to develop a Workplace Policy on Domestic and Sexual Abuse, which was updated in 2022 following the introduction of the new domestic abuse offence in Northern Ireland.

**J.** Both the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan have a 'prioritising prevention pillar', whose commitments aim to reduce the number of crimes by stopping people becoming perpetrators and victims in the first place. There are also a number of commitments aimed at improving government understanding of the effectiveness of interventions and educating the public, including children.

Workstreams under this pillar include:

- In 2022, the Home Office ran a commercial competition for 'What Works Funding' which allocated up to £6.6 million to five organisations to better understand what works to prevent VAWG. These are high-quality, evidence-informed prevention projects, including in schools, which aim to educate and inform children and young people about VAWG, healthy relationships and the consequences of abuse. This funding runs until 2025.
- The Domestic Homicide Prevention pilot is a collaboration between the Home Office and the National Police Chiefs' Council Domestic Abuse Lead, Assistant Commissioner Louisa Rolfe. The pilot will identify forces which have relatively high levels of domestic homicides and serious domestic abuse incidents. These forces will be audited to ensure they are doing everything they can to prevent domestic abusers from causing harm.

In **Wales**, the Welsh Government's 'Programme for Government 2021-2026' contains a commitment to expand the 'Don't be a Bystander' training and awareness campaigns.

The Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt MS, has recently agreed three-year funding to develop and deliver a pan-Wales bystander intervention training initiative that will be delivered to citizens of Wales. Welsh Government officials have recently undertaken scoping exercises with VAWDASV stakeholders and those with lived experience, who showed unanimous support for the initiative, and are now preparing a commercial tendering exercise.

In **Scotland**, the Scottish Government has launched a consultation on draft reforms, which would create five new laws to provide police and prosecutors with new powers to tackle the corrosive effects of misogyny. The proposals are based on the recommendations made by a Working Group on Misogyny led by Baroness Kennedy. The five proposed laws are:

- An offence of misogynistic harassment
- An offence of misogynistic behaviour
- A statutory aggravation concerning misogyny
- An offence of threatening or abusive communications to women or girls that reference rape, sexual assault or disfigurement
- An offence of stirring up hatred against women and girls

In **Northern Ireland**, the development of the draft Strategic Framework for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls and the draft first year action plan is ongoing, and will be issued for public consultation this year, with a view to launching them before the end of the year.

A new Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy for Northern Ireland is currently being developed, and a public consultation launched on 7 February 2023.

The Northern Ireland Executive's Tackling Paramilitarism, Criminality and Organised Crime Programme is an ambitious cross-departmental and multi-disciplinary initiative designed to address these complex problems and create safer communities, resilient to paramilitarism, criminality and coercive control. The programme operates throughout Northern Ireland and projects vary in scale, focus, location, target group and methodology, depending on assessed need. Projects must offer some form of 'additionality'. In 2022/23, around £11.5 million was invested in nearly 80 projects, several of which deal exclusively with women.

Initiatives within the Police Service for Northern Ireland include:

- launch of Ask for Angela (partnered with hospitality sector),
- additional training and awareness (on the domestic abuse offence, stalking, and non-fatal strangulation),
- introduction of domestic homicide reviews and delivery against a number of internal learning reviews,
- preparation for the introduction of ancillary orders
- review of multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) processes
- introduction of rape myths training and organisational change
- rollout of Operation Encompass [see footnote 4].
- training with marginalised communities – awareness sessions with LGBTQIA partners
- listening events with university students
- extension of Ask for ANI code words
- introduction of the ASSIST NI services for advocacy to support victims of domestic and sexual abuse

#### **IV. Protection and support**

**A.** Section 32 of The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 contains the legal framework for the requirement for the Secretary of State for Justice to issue a code of practice as to the services to be provided to victims of crime. The Victims' Code of Practice (the Code) sets out the services that victims can expect from the criminal justice system in England and Wales.

On 29 March 2023, the Government introduced a landmark Victims and Prisoners Bill, which seeks to repeal and restate the existing legal framework for the Code, including additional measures aimed at strengthening the framework by specifying key principles that the Code should reflect.

The current Code sets out 12 key entitlements for victims of crime, which are clear, concise and easy to understand. It also conveys to victims key information about the relevant legal processes which affect them and the legal measures available to them. The Government intends to replicate this in the new Code.

The Code also sets out that victims can expect to be referred to and access support services, and to be able to understand and be understood throughout the criminal justice process. The Victims and Prisoners Bill also introduces a duty on specified criminal justice bodies<sup>6</sup> to promote awareness of the Code among people using the services of those bodies and members of the public more generally so that all victims understand the standards of service they should be receiving. Supporting statutory guidance will set out ways this can be done including suggestions on the timing of sharing and considerations to increase accessibility of the materials provided.

The Victims and Prisoners Bill further introduces a duty on the same specified bodies and oversight bodies including PCC to keep compliance with the Code under review. This will ensure effective and consistent local oversight of how victims are treated and build a national picture of the delivery of the Code across the criminal justice system.

In **Scotland**, the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014 contains provisions for victims to receive information on available support services. The Victims' Code for Scotland was published under that Act, setting out the various rights and support available, including legal assistance. Criminal justice organisations also publish standards of service under the Act.

Police Scotland operate a domestic abuse disclosure scheme whereby individuals can seek information about whether or not a partner has previously been charged with domestic abuse related offences.

In **Northern Ireland**, a victim of crime leaflet is offered to all victims of crime following an incident. This provides an overview of the criminal justice process and services that may be available as they move through the criminal justice system. This leaflet is available in English and six other languages most commonly used at police/court stage.

The Safe Spaces Initiative, alongside the Ask for ANI codeword scheme, went live on 20 February 2023 in four of the Department for Communities' Jobs and Benefits Offices (JBOs). These pilots will run for nine months - after evaluation, rollout to the wider group of JBOs will be agreed.

Nexus (an organisation within Northern Ireland which supports individuals who are impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships) has provided a video on this, which has been shared with all staff in Universal Credit Operations. They have also delivered additional training for staff in the JBO pilot sites on the process for handling disclosures.

Universal Credit Operations is also collaborating with a number of other partners, such as, the PSNI and Onus, Training (NI) Ltd, to provide further awareness sessions and videos from other domestic and sexual abuse campaigns. The PSNI is also planning on delivering sessions for staff on the process for reporting domestic and sexual abuse crimes and the steps taken by the PSNI to investigate these.

Please see Part III, Section I, for information on the Statement of Expectations issued by the Department for Education to Higher Education Institutes (HEIs).

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<sup>6</sup> All local police forces in England and Wales and the Ministry of Defence Police and the British Transport Police, the CPS, HMCTS, HMPPS & Youth Offending Teams.

A victim of crime leaflet is offered to all victims of crime following an incident. This provides an overview of the criminal justice process and services that may be available as they move through the criminal justice system. This leaflet is available in English and six other languages most commonly used at police/court stage. Within the Northern Ireland Prison Service, information on support services and legal measure is available to victims of violence via the groups listed in question B1 below.

**B.1.** The Ministry of Justice published the Victims Funding Strategy on 26 May 2022. It is a cross-government strategy that sets out a framework which will improve the way victim support services are funded across government. The Strategy introduced national commissioning standards, applicable to commissioners across all crime types, which will encourage an expected level of service for victims. One of these standards is 'victims at the centre of commissioning', which sets out an expectation that commissioners will ensure that their needs assessment include all the data required to commission appropriate services, which would include the needs of women and victims with tailored need.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 amended homelessness legislation, such that all those who are homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse have priority need for accommodation secured by the local authority. This change came into force in July 2021. Local authorities must provide temporary accommodation (TA) until the duty can be discharged through provision of settled accommodation. The TA must meet the usual suitability requirements set out in legislation. Statutory homelessness data shows a rise in cases accepted for priority need accommodation following the Domestic Abuse Act. The number of households found to be in priority need due to being a victim of domestic abuse increased by 59%: from 1,580 households in 2020/21 to 2,520 in 2021/22. The Government's Homelessness Prevention Grant funding to local authorities includes funding to cover the cost of extending priority need to those who are made homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse.

The Homelessness Code of Guidance sets out comprehensive guidance on providing homelessness services to people who have experienced, or are at risk of, domestic abuse.

The Government is committed to supporting victims of domestic abuse in social housing. Landlords are required to give appropriate priority to victims and are required to protect their security of tenure if they need to move to escape domestic abuse.

Last year the Government ran two consultations that seek to give victims of domestic abuse more choice over where they rebuild their lives. The first concerned regulations to prevent local authorities from applying a local connection test to victims who apply for social housing, so that they can move away from their perpetrator. The second was to gather evidence on whether victims who are in joint tenancies with their abuser want to remain in their own homes rather than fleeing, and how to support them to do so if they feel it is safe. The consultations fulfilled commitments made during the passage of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

When considering the appropriateness of a referral into any type of psychological support, the referrer will undertake a holistic assessment ensuring that all relevant considerations pertaining to the victim and their circumstances are taken into account.

In November 2022, the Department of Health and Social Care published and disseminated a [working definition of trauma informed practice](#) for the health and care sector.

The following guidance has been issued regarding trauma-informed approaches:

- As per the [published guidance](#) (see page 2) for NHS Talking Therapies, during the assessment there should be an exploration of any adverse circumstances that maintain a person's presenting symptoms, such as domestic violence.
- The Community Mental Health Framework sets out that available interventions should include access to psychological therapies, improved physical health care, employment support, personalised and trauma-informed care, a medicines management and support for self harm



and co-occurring drug or alcohol-use disorders. [community-mental-health-framework-for-adults-and-older-adults.pdf \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publications/community-mental-health-framework-for-adults-and-older-adults.pdf)

The establishment of Integrated Care Systems and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) provides an opportunity for greater understanding of local health needs of victims of abuse. ICBs are required to set out in their Joint Forward Plans how they will address the needs of victims of abuse. NHS England is developing guidance to assist ICBs in doing so and to promote a collaborative approach to service delivery for victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

The NHS Long Term Plan commits an additional £2.3 billion a year for mental health services in England by March 2024, supporting an additional 2 million people, including victims of domestic and sexual violence, to get the NHS-funded mental health support they need.

The NHS Talking Therapies programme provides evidence-based therapies for people with common mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression. For adults' services, all NHS Talking Therapies services employ therapists who are trained to work with clients experiencing trauma including domestic and sexual abuse.

Department for Work and Pensions Jobcentres provide a supportive environment, and there are special provisions for people experiencing domestic abuse. For example, the local Jobcentre can support a victim/survivor of domestic abuse to open a new Universal Credit claim and apply for an advance payment where needed, which can provide quicker access to money, without the ex-partner having any access to any information about this new claim. A pilot of the Ask for ANI codeword scheme went live on 20 February 2023 across 14 Jobcentre Plus sites in England, Wales and Scotland. The pilot will be evaluated, to inform decisions about expansion.

In **Wales**, The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 places a duty on local authorities and local health boards to jointly assess the needs for care and support in their area. Supplementary advice issued by Welsh Government to the Regional Partnership Boards contains further guidance on the assessment of need and the assessment of the range and level of services required to meet those needs.

Annex C of this supplementary advice focuses on VAWDASV and commits that information and analysis contained within population needs assessments should focus on the health, care and support needs of individuals (whether adults or children) impacted by VAWDASV. The Statutory Guidance for the Commissioning of VAWDASV Services in Wales identifies principles for commissioners to ensure there is engagement informed by survivors, to inform needs analysis and service design for whole system responses.

In **Scotland**, The Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act helps prevent women's homelessness by barring the perpetrator of domestic abuse from the home and giving social landlords the ability to apply to the court for an order to transfer a tenancy to the victim-survivor. The Scottish Government will also make it a legal requirement for social landlords to develop and implement a domestic abuse housing policy via a forthcoming housing bill.

The Scottish Government is bringing forward legislation to introduce a right to automatic publicly-funded Independent Legal Representation for complainers (in sexual offence cases) where a request is made to lead evidence in court which related to their sexual history or character. The Scottish Government is providing £18.5 million for specialist advocacy support for survivors of gender-based violence.

The Scottish Government have produced a trauma-informed practice and domestic abuse companion document, to sit alongside the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This document aims to support all professionals working with women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse and those working with perpetrators, to strengthen awareness and understanding about trauma-informed and domestic abuse-informed practice.

In Scotland, there is a free resource for universities working to prevent GBV on their campus ([ESHE Toolkit | University of Strathclyde](#)) and a gender-based violence in schools working group has been established to develop a national framework to prevent and respond to harmful behaviour and gender-based violence in schools.

No One Left Behind is the Scottish Government's, all-age, person-centred, tailored employability service. It is aimed at a range of people including women who have experienced violence and trauma.

In **Northern Ireland** the Department for Communities' (DfC) Jobs & Benefits offices help support victims of domestic abuse by signposting them to the PSNI, local organisations or other support networks. They continually work in close partnership with organisations and services within local communities to ensure that vulnerable women victims gain access to all the help and support available. They will provide a private space to help women victims to open a new Universal Credit claim. They will also help them to apply for help from DfC's Discretionary Support scheme or a Universal Credit advance payment to ensure they have quick access to money, and will take steps to ensure their former partner will not have access to any information about their new claim.

Within Finance Support, special provisions are available for victims of any form of violence, whereby applications for assistance for financial support can be highlighted and escalated to ensure an urgent outcome. Good working relationships are maintained with a number of third party organisations who deal with victims of violence, and there is also an online escalation process which can be accessed 24/7 by those same third parties.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive, through the Supporting People programme, helps vulnerable people live independently in the community. The programme provides grant funding for housing-related support services for those affected by domestic violence which deliver outcomes aligned to Article 20, paragraph 1. The support offered helps women with needs specific to their domestic abuse situation to make informed choices about their accommodation and to maintain/sustain a home. Support can also include help to access other agencies and services through relevant signposting as part of support planning engagement.

Providers in all training programmes funded by the Department for the Economy (DfE) must undertake to ensure they are compliant with all legislation relating to children and adults at risk, and that all related and relevant policies and procedures are effective and kept up-to-date to reflect current requirements and guidance, including safeguarding policies.

DfE has also issued a Statement of Expectations to the higher education institutions (HEIs). This statement provides a set of recommendations to help Northern Ireland's universities develop and implement effective systems, policies and processes to prevent and respond to incidents of harassment and sexual misconduct. This includes recommending the provision of support for students, including signposting or referring students to the police, the NHS, sexual assault referral centres or hate crime reporting centres, etc., if specialist support is needed.

The PSNI will signpost domestic and sexual abuse victims to a range of voluntary/support organisations. This is supplementary to a referral to Victim Support Northern Ireland for all victims of domestic and sexual abuse-motivated crimes. Support mechanisms are also available for high-risk victims of domestic abuse, who can be referred to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences.

Within the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), a range of support is available, including Beyond Trauma, a new 12 session programme within the NIPS for women who have experienced trauma in their lives.

**B.2.** NHS England commissions 48 Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs). SARCs offer medical, practical and emotional support to anyone who has been raped, sexually assaulted or abused, including women victims. SARCs are part of wider integrated pathways between statutory and specialist support services. Referrals are made both into and out of SARC services by a wide range of specialist organisations.

NHS England set up the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Programme to consider the response to sexual violence and domestic abuse.

The programme's aims are to:

- Transform NHS England's response to sexual violence and domestic abuse.
- Build on robust safeguarding processes for protecting patients and consider how NHS England can better systematise support for victims, early intervention and prevention, and address related access and health inequality issues.
- Show national leadership in how to support staff experiencing these crimes, building on current policies and training and ensuring that best practice is available to all 42 Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)<sup>7</sup> and Trusts.

As of 31 January 2023, ICBs are under a duty to undertake a strategic needs assessment and produce a plan to prevent 'serious violence' (in which domestic abuse and sexual violence is included) with partners such as local authorities and the police. NHS England's Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence programme aims to assist regions and ICBs to implement these requirements. ICBs must set out how they will address the needs of victims of abuse in their joint forward plans. The Joint Forward Plan Guidance was published in December 2022.

Domestic abuse is now covered within standard NHS contracts setting out the accountability systems have in assessing and actioning their services to be responsive to and meet the needs of people who experience domestic abuse and/or sexual violence in England. It remains the responsibility of individual trusts and healthcare organisations to ensure they are compliant with their legislative duties when supporting victims of domestic abuse and/or sexual violence.

Provisions in the Care Act 2014 and accompanying statutory guidance are clear how adults with care and support needs in any setting should be safeguarded where they are at risk of or are experiencing abuse. Additionally, as set out in the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), ICBs, local authorities and the police are under a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

All health providers are required under statute and regulation to have effective arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk of harm and abuse in every service that they deliver.

All NHS staff undertake mandatory safeguarding training which includes a focus on domestic abuse. NHS England continues to review mandatory safeguarding training for all health professionals to ensure that they are fully equipped with the key skills, knowledge, and principles to protect all individuals.

In **Wales**, the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 places a duty on local authorities to take into account domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women when undertaking a needs assessment to assess wellbeing. Public Health Wales's<sup>8</sup> website promotes The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (Wales) 2015 alongside statutory guidance for commissioners and the National Training Framework.

In **Scotland**, since April 2022, Scottish Health Boards have been required to provide Sexual Assault Response Coordination Services (SARCS). A SARCS is a dedicated healthcare service for people who have recently experienced rape or sexual assault, offering a healthcare assessment and Forensic Medical Examination (FME) where needed.

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<sup>7</sup> An ICB is a statutory NHS organisation responsible for developing a plan in collaboration with NHS trusts/foundation trusts and other system partners for meeting the health needs of the population, managing the NHS budget and arranging for the provision of health services in the defined area.

<sup>8</sup> Public Health Wales is the national public health agency in Wales and exists to protect and improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities for people in Wales.

[CEL 41 \(2008\) - Gender-based violence action plan \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#) outlines the requirements on NHS Boards in Scotland to tackle gender-based violence which are still in place today, for example having an Executive Lead and Operational Lead in place, routine enquiry in priority settings, and guidance being available for staff.

Examples of staff guidance in Scotland can be found from [Publications - Public Health Scotland](#) with updated [SARCS](#) and [Human trafficking](#) guidance available from the Scottish Government. Guidance and referral to support services is also included in [school nursing: priority areas and pathways](#) and [Health Visiting Pathway](#).

In **Northern Ireland**, under the 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy', the Department of Health piloted the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) Programme with a number of GP practices. The Department also commissioned a regional specialist sexual violence counselling service and the Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre. A Domestic Abuse Support Worker was piloted in Craigavon and Daisy Hill Hospital Emergency Departments by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. A global e-learning package on domestic abuse developed by the Department of Justice was made available to all staff across the Health and Social Care Trusts, to raise awareness and better equip staff to recognise and respond to domestic abuse.

**B.3.** This information is not available.

**C.** The Government and Equalities Office funds the Equality Advisory and Support Service, which provides a website and helpline for advice on human rights and equality issues, across England, Scotland and Wales.

The Victims' Code (the Code) informs victims that they are able to complain if they are dissatisfied with a service they receive under the Code. In the first instance they are advised to complain to the relevant body and follow that body's internal complaints procedure. If they are still dissatisfied, they are advised to make a complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO). PHSO deal with complaints about public bodies, including criminal justice bodies, if the complainant feels their complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily by the body itself. The Victims and Prisoners Bill includes provisions to improve access to complaints through removing the need for victims to complain to the PHSO through an MP.

In **Wales**, the Welsh Government funds Welsh Women's Aid's National Quality Service Standards, which include a requirement for best practice regarding complaints procedures.

In **Scotland**, detailed information on how victims can progress complaints in a range of areas associated with the criminal justice process can be found in a number of support organisations funded by the Scottish Government and by those providing engagement with the justice system, including the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and the Scottish Court and Tribunals Service (SCTS). The Scottish Legal Complaints Commission is the first point of contact for all complaints about lawyers in Scotland. The service is independent and free.

In **Northern Ireland**, the Victim of Crime Charter sets out victims' entitlements to services from various service providers and how they should be treated. If service providers fail to provide the services set out under the Charter, victims of crime are entitled to have them look into the matter. They are also entitled to be informed by service providers about their complaints mechanism. Individual criminal justice agencies will have their own individual complaints policies and procedures in place for anyone wishing to make a complaint through this separate channel.

The Commissioner Designate for Victims of Crime has a role in monitoring the responses victims receive to their complaints. She encourages victims to copy her into any complaints they make and asks to be copied into the responses received.

**D.** In the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 the Government introduced a statutory duty on Tier 1 local authorities in England to provide support for victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation, including refuges. The duty came into force in October 2021.

To accompany the new duty the Government published statutory guidance making clear its expectations to local authorities on how it should be delivered on the ground. Under the new locally led duties local authorities are required to set up a Local Partnership Board, assess the local support needs of all victims, prepare and publish strategies, commission support to meet the identified needs in safe accommodation, monitor and evaluate local delivery and report annually to the Government. The statutory guidance was also clear that the support should be delivered by knowledgeable and/or experienced specialist providers, charities and other voluntary organisations whose purpose is to provide support to victims of domestic abuse. All safe accommodation under the duty must be single-gender or single-sex, and must meet either Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), Women's Aid, Imkaan, or other nationally recognised quality standards for domestic abuse support services.

Since 2020, DLUHC have provided £276 million in funding for support in safe accommodation services including £250 million to local authorities for the delivery of their duties to provide support within safe accommodation to victims of domestic abuse and their children. On 12 December 2022 the Government announced a further two years of funding: £127.3 million and £129.7 million for the delivery of these duties in 2023/24 and 2024/25, to enable local authorities to make longer-term commissioning decisions and give certainty to local specialist domestic abuse refuge providers. Since 2003 DLUHC has part-funded Women's Aid's 'Routes to Support', a UK-wide online directory of VAWG services, including information with up-to-date refuge vacancies. Since 2016 DLUHC has also financially supported a specialist Women's Aid project – 'No Women Turned Away' - which provides additional support to victims of domestic abuse and their children who face additional barriers to accessing services and support.

Between October 2021 and March 2023, DLUHC provided £5.7 million for a Respite Rooms Pilot Programme which supported 792 rough sleepers affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence, to get off the street and out of danger. 12 local authority areas took part in the pilot, ten of which have been continuing to run their Respite Rooms after the pilot ended. The Respite Rooms provide safe single sex or single gender spaces alongside specialist trauma-informed support for vulnerable victims, including victims of domestic abuse and those with multiple and complex needs such as substance misuse, victims of sexual trafficking, and those with no recourse to public funds.

As part of the Government's commitment to tackling VAWG, the Ministry of Justice and Home Office have also committed up to £6 million in ring-fenced grant funding for 'by and for' services over two years, from 2023/24 to 2024/25.<sup>9</sup> The purpose of the fund is to build capacity and capability in 'by and for' services to better support victims and survivors of VAWG. In addition to the £6 million, a further £2.4 million has been committed over the same period for specialist (non-'by and for') services, a sexual violence support fund and work to enhance employers' response to domestic abuse.

The Government also provides a Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund (the organisations funded are listed [here](#)). The purpose of the fund is to provide emotional and practical support to female and male victims of rape and sexual abuse, including victims of child sexual abuse. The Fund is currently being recommissioned for the period August 2023 – March 2025, to make sure it meets the needs of all victims in the most effective way.

On 7 December 2022, the Ministry of Justice launched the national 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line. The service is available to all victims of rape and sexual abuse aged 16 and over in England and Wales. Victims have access to free, confidential emotional support from specially trained operators, via phone or webchat, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Ministry of Justice also funds two national sexual violence helplines for male victims: Safeline's National Male Survivor Helpline and Online Support Service, and Survivors UK's National Online Helpline.

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<sup>9</sup> 'By and for' services are specialist services that are led, designed, and delivered by and for the users and communities they aim to serve.

The Ministry of Justice provides PCCs with annual grant funding to commission local practical, emotional and therapeutic support services for victims of all crime types. This includes:

- ringfenced funding for victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse
- ringfenced funding to increase the number of Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) by 300, to over 1,000, by 2024/25 - a 43% increase on the number of ISVAs and IDVAs over this spending review period (2022/23 to 2024/25 inclusive).

NHS England commissions Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) across England. There are 48 centres, with at least one in each county/region to ensure an equitable spread.

39 Scottish Women's Aid services provide 387 bed spaces across **Scotland**. A level of service is offered 24/7 nationally through a helpline. Local services times may vary; any out of hours services needed by refuge tenants are supported through on call workers. Services are available to women and children/young people who are experiencing/have experienced domestic abuse. There are an estimated 13,660 adult referrals into Scottish Women's Aid services. Funding varies, with the majority coming from Scottish Government and local authorities. Outreach and community-based services are free.

There are 17 local Rape Crisis Centres (RCC) across Scotland providing support and advocacy to survivors in all but one local authority area. There are 500 people employed across the Rape Crisis network in Scotland. The Rape Crisis Scotland (RCS) advocacy services, Scottish Women's Rights Centre and 17 local RCCs provide support Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm, however some may operate outreach out with these hours. Rape Crisis Network operate to the Rape Crisis National Service Standards. The majority of rape crisis services across Scotland are open to all survivors aged 12 or above. In 2021-22, local RCCs provided support to 8,198 individuals. The Rape Crisis network receives the majority of funding from Scottish Government, although centres receive funding from other sources too. RCS and local RCCs are charities. All services provided by the Rape Crisis network are free at the point of access for survivors.

In **Northern Ireland**, under the 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy', the Department of Health (DoH) piloted the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) Programme. 40 practices are currently signed up to IRIS in the Belfast; Newry & District; and Craigavon GP Federations, with two Advocate Educators in post. 271 referrals to the Advocates have been made to date, 256 of them female. For victims of sexual abuse, The Rowan, the regional SARC, continues to be available 24/7 in the grounds of Antrim Area Hospital. The DoH also commissioned a regional specialist sexual violence counselling service (17,080 sessions a year). The Southern Health and Social Care Trust piloted a Domestic Abuse Support Worker in Craigavon and Daisy Hill Hospital Emergency Departments.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive, through the Supporting People programme, helps vulnerable people live independently in the community. The programme provides grant funding for short-term female only emergency accommodation-based services, providing support for those in housing need and through short term Floating Support services for those who choose to remain at home or in a community setting.

#### **In relation to questions D1-10:**

The answers below relate to domestic abuse safe accommodation services. Data broken down by service is not held. The data is either at national or local authority level.

1. DLUHC does not hold data centrally on the number of safe accommodation services. The Women's Aid Domestic Abuse Report 2022: The Annual Audit report that there are 269 safe accommodation services across England that cover every region in England. The number of refuge spaces on 1 May 2022 was 4,344.
2. DLUHC does not collect data on the number of paid staff per service.
3. DLUHC does not collect data on the accessibility of services.
4. The statutory guidance to accompany the duties is clear that all safe accommodation under the duty must be single-gender or single-sex, and must meet either [DLUHC Quality Standards](#), Women's Aid, Imkaan, or other nationally recognised quality standards for domestic abuse support services. It is also clear that the support should be delivered by knowledgeable and/or

experienced specialist providers, charities, and other voluntary organisations whose purpose is to provide support to victims of domestic abuse.

5. Under their duties within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 local authorities must assess the need for all victims, and commission a range of tailored support services to meet their needs.
6. Annual data shows that 38,057 referrals were made to safe accommodation services in England between April 2021 and March 2022. These referrals are counted by household so it is not known how many women sought support. 19,053 women received support within safe accommodation during this period. There were 11,536 children supported in safe accommodation at the same time, but the identity of the parent who brought them is not known.
7. Local authorities are provided with Government funding on an annual basis to deliver the requirements of the statutory duty to provide support within safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and their children. This funding is provided through an un-ringfenced grant through Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. Local authorities are then responsible for commissioning the appropriate services in line with public procurement rules. Women's Aid report that domestic abuse safe accommodation service providers also receive funding from PCCs and Clinical Commissioning Groups, and through charity fundraising.
8. DLUHC does not centrally hold data on who runs refuge services. Most refuges in England are run by dedicated domestic abuse charities, with others run by organisations such as housing associations, or other charities. A small minority are provided by local authorities.
9. Each provider decides its own operating model but in the majority of cases the accommodation costs of safe accommodation services are the responsibility of the resident. This can be covered by housing-related benefits for those who are eligible. Support costs are not typically charged to the victim.
10. Multi-agency working is important to deliver the duty successfully. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires local authorities to appoint a local partnership board to support and advise as they develop their safe accommodation strategy. All Tier 1 Local Authorities have now put such a board in place, which brings together general support services such as health, police and housing together with specialist domestic abuse service providers. This duty is locally led, so it is also very important for specialist and general support services to build their own links at local authority level.

#### NHS England

1. NHS England commissions SARC across England. There are 48 centres across England with at least one in each county/region to ensure an equitable spread.
2. Information on the number of paid health staff per service is not available.
3. SARCs offer services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
4. SARCs are not specialist women's services; they are open to all but by the nature of their roles, SARC staff have a sex-based understanding of the issues surrounding VAWG.
5. SARCs offer medical, practical and emotional support to anyone who has been raped, sexually assaulted or abused.
6. In 2021/22, SARCs delivered services and support to 10,366 victims of sexual violence who identified as female.
7. The funding allocation was £42 million for financial year 2021/22.
8. NHS England leads the NHS in England. NHS England commissions 48 SARCs across England.
9. SARCs services are free of charge for all women.
10. SARCs are part of wider integrated pathways between statutory and specialist support services. Referrals are made both into and out of SARC services by a wide range of specialist organisations.

In **Wales**, the Welsh Government funds VAWDASV regions and specialist services to provide invaluable and lifesaving support to all victims of VAWDASV; this includes early intervention, preventative and educational support, perpetrator intervention programmes, Independent Domestic Violence Advocates for high-risk victims, and therapeutic recovery interventions for the ongoing support of those impacted by VAWDASV. This funding ensures that no matter where a victim lives in Wales, there is a strong public and specialist service ready to help.

The Welsh Government previously issued statutory guidance that requires local authorities and local health boards to produce a local VAWDASV strategy and implementation plan. This includes statutory guidance on regional needs-led commissioning of VAWDASV services.

Wales has SARCs, which provide services to victims of rape or sexual assault regardless of whether they report the offence to the police or not. The Welsh Government continues to invest funding to support the reduction of sexual violence waiting lists in Wales.

The Welsh Government provides funding for Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs), and funding for training them. They also provide funding for SARCs, and a range of direct services including counselling support.

Local authorities in Wales are required to support people who are or are at risk of becoming homeless. The Welsh Government provides funding support through the Housing Support Grant for this purpose, including supporting those fleeing domestic abuse.

For **Scotland**, please see the information in question D, above.

For **Northern Ireland** (in relation to the Supporting People programme, which helps vulnerable people to live independently in the community).

1. Please refer to Appendix A, Table 3.
2. This information is not held.
3. Refuges are open 24/7. Floating support is available from Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.
4. The primary client group is women at risk of domestic violence.
5. The service is available for women and women with children.
6. This information is not held.
7. The programme is funded through grant funding, with 13 four weekly payments made to service providers *per annum*.
8. The service is run by voluntary not for profit organisations.
9. The service is free of charge for all women, irrespective of their income.
10. The aim of support is to help women with needs specific to their domestic abuse situation to make informed choices about their accommodation and be able to maintain/sustain a home. Support can also include help to access other agencies and services.

**E.** The Home Office funds seven national VAWG helplines: the National Domestic Abuse Helpline (run by Refuge); the National LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline (run by Galop); the Revenge Porn Helpline (run by the South-West Grid for Learning); the Male Victims (of domestic abuse) Helpline (run by Respect); Respect's helpline for perpetrators of domestic abuse; the National 'Honour'-Based Abuse Helpline (run by Karma Nirvana); and the National Stalking Helpline (run by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust). As part of the Tackling VAWG Strategy and Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan, the Government has increased funding for all these helplines. The Home Office also funds the Operation Encompass helpline which provides free access for teachers to confidential and immediate support and guidance.

These helplines operate in England and Wales and are free of charge and confidential. The majority of helplines do not operate 24/7. Training is provided by the helpline provider and is tailored to the type of helpline; having the right level of expertise is a requirement as part of the grant management process. The annual number of calls made to the helplines is over 10,000.

The Government runs the Forced Marriage Unit for victims or potential victims of forced marriage (and, in the case of British nationals overseas, of FGM) and the professionals helping them. This runs throughout the UK, is free and confidential, and is available between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday; staff are trained in forced marriage. In 2022 the unit dealt with 302 calls and emails in which advice and support were provided for victims of forced marriage or FGM, and 545 general enquiries.

On 7 December 2022, the Ministry of Justice launched the national 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line. The service is available to all victims of rape and sexual abuse aged 16 and over in England and Wales. Victims have access to free, confidential, emotional support from specially trained operators, via phone or webchat, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



In **Wales**, the Welsh Government funds the Live Fear Free helpline, delivered by Welsh Women's Aid and staffed by trained advocates. This delivers a free, 24 hour, 365 days a year, confidential, culturally sensitive/multilingual service, providing a main point of contact to survivors, family/friends and professionals. It covers all aspects of VAWDASV. The helpline offers support ranging from light-touch signposting information to more in depth packages of support for callers, including risk assessment, housing options and access to the UK refuge space database. Throughout 2021 there were 34,737 contacts to the Live Fear Free helpline which is a 16.3% increase on the number of contacts throughout 2020.

The Welsh Government also funds [Dyn](#), a helpline for male victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The following support service helplines are available in **Scotland**: Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline, Rape Crisis Scotland's National Helpline, Scottish Women's Rights Centre, The Men's Advice Line, The Respect Phonenumber and SACRO's Fearfree Project.

Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline operates in all parts of Scotland. The helpline is free of charge, operates 24/7 and follows a [Privacy Notice](#). All call handlers have extensive training, internal and externally. Between April 2022 and March 2023 there were 7,210 calls and 12,514 total contacts (through calls, email, webchat etc).

The Rape Crisis Scotland National Helpline is available to anyone in Scotland. Calls are free of charge. The helpline operates from 5pm to midnight, 365 days a year. It is a confidential service with a privacy policy. All support workers receive training and induction as well as access to ongoing training and development and quality monitoring procedures. 5,407 calls were made to the helpline in 2021-22.

In **Northern Ireland**, under the 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy', the Departments of Health, Justice and Communities jointly funded the regional Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline, which is confidential, free of charge and available 24/7, and provides a translation service. The helpline offers emotional support and information about, and referrals to, support services. During 2021/22, 11,568 calls were made to the Helpline. Helpline operators are fully trained.

**F.** The [Safeguarding Children as Victims and Witnesses legal guidance](#) provides practical and legal guidance to prosecutors dealing with cases that involve children as victims and witnesses.

Special measures are a series of provisions that help vulnerable and intimidated witnesses provide their best evidence in court. Special measures apply to prosecution and defence witnesses, but not to the defendant, and are subject to the discretion of the court. [Special Measures](#) prosecutorial guidance assists prosecutors when they are making decisions about cases. It is updated to reflect changes in law and practice.

A vulnerable or intimidated witness will be eligible for special measures under sections 16-33 of the [Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999](#). Victims of domestic abuse, modern slavery and sexual offences will be automatically eligible under section 17 (4) and (5) of the Act since they satisfy the criteria that the quality of their evidence is likely to be diminished by reason of fear or distress in connection with testifying in the proceedings. Child witnesses under the age of 18 will be automatically eligible for special measures due to their age. Generally, a court will consider an application on the basis of whether, in its opinion, any one or combination of special measures will be likely to improve the quality of evidence given by the witness.

Child protection procedures are set out in the "Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)" statutory guidance if harm is suspected. This includes taking a child-centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding which means keeping the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families.

In **Scotland**, through the implementation of the Scottish approach to Barnahus, known as Bairns' Hoose, all children who have been victims of, or witnesses to, abuse or violence, as well as children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused significant harm or abuse, will have access to trauma-informed recovery, support and justice. National Bairns' Hoose standards have been developed and the Pathfinder phase of Bairns' Hoose development commences in 2023.

The Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2019 improved how child and vulnerable witnesses participate in the criminal justice system by enabling the much greater use of pre-recording of their evidence in advance of the criminal trial. The Act created a new rule for under-18s to ensure that where they are due to give evidence in the most serious cases, they will have it pre-recorded, usually by the special measure "evidence by commissioner". The principles underpinning the Scottish Child Interview Model for Joint Investigative Interviews will be a fundamental aspect of Scotland's national Bairns' Hoose model, to ensure that interviews are conducted with the best interest of the child as a primary consideration.

In **Northern Ireland**, the Department of Justice provides financial support to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) Young Witness Service, which engages volunteers and provides services and support to individuals. The Young Witness Service offers support to 100% of all young prosecution witnesses referred to the service. It works in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies to meet the needs of young witnesses. Support before trial may include sessions in the young person's home or by digital means and will usually include a pre-trial visit to the court and familiarisation with TV link equipment. At trial, the young witness service will be available to accompany the young witness into the court or TV link room. Post-trial follow-up will provide debriefing for the young witness and his/her parents/carers and will address onward referral (particularly for counselling or post-abuse treatment work). The Service will provide the court with information about the needs, wishes and feelings of the young witness and will assist the young victim to make a Victim Personal Statement, when required.

**G.** The Government has run several campaigns on VAWG, including the ongoing 'Enough' campaign, the teenage relationship abuse campaign, and targeted campaigns on forced marriage and FGM. These campaigns will always direct people to the relevant source of expertise or authority. For example, the 2018-19 forced marriage campaign directed people to the Forced Marriage Unit, and the 2018-19 FGM campaign directed people to the NSPCC's FGM helpline.

The legal framework on information sharing allows professionals to share information and make reports appropriately, subject to any relevant restrictions in the data protection legislation. This is supported by several initiatives to encourage information sharing across agencies. For example, information sharing takes place through MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) and MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements). MARACs enable different agencies to work together to support victim-survivors of domestic abuse. Together, these agencies can share their knowledge to create better plans that keep people safe.

Where a perpetrator has been convicted by the courts and is subject to MAPPA, the Responsible Authorities (the police, local authorities, health boards and HMPPS) must collectively ensure that the risk assessment and risk management plan put in place for the perpetrator takes full account of the victim's safety and concerns. MAPPA provides a robust statutory framework for the Responsible Authorities to work together and share information where necessary and appropriate for law enforcement purposes. These purposes include prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences against women.

In **Scotland**, the Scottish Government is supporting the role out and operation of MARACs in Scotland. As of August 2022, MARACs are operating in every local authority in Scotland to improve the safety of victims of domestic abuse and their children. MAPPA also operates in Scotland.

In **Northern Ireland**, in July 2020 the then Minister for Infrastructure Nichola Mallon introduced free travel on Ulsterbus and/or NI Railways for anyone who has been provided with refuge or emergency accommodation through Women's Aid or the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).

Work is underway to introduce Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Orders, which will provide protection to those affected by domestic abuse. A range of other protection measures are also available, including Non-Molestation Orders, Occupation Orders and Restraining Orders.

A multimedia advertising campaign was undertaken to raise awareness of domestic abuse and the support services available, and to encourage reporting, between 2018 and 2023.

## **V. Substantive law**

**A.1.** The legislation is a mixture of criminal and civil law. Please see section 5.1 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#) prepared to obtain the UK Parliament's consent to the UK's ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

**A.2.** Please see section 5.1 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#) prepared to obtain the UK Parliament's consent to the UK's ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

**Wales's** ground-breaking [Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) created duties on local authorities and health boards in Wales to publish and implement strategies for addressing these issues in local communities. This ensures that tackling VAWDASV is prioritised across Wales.

**A.3.** Please see section 5.1 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#) prepared to obtain the UK Parliament's consent to the UK's ratification of the Istanbul Convention. This provides a high-level summary of the provisions of the pieces of legislation. The legislation itself can be found by searching for it on the [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk) website. In each case, a more detailed summary of the legislation can be found within the Explanatory Notes (available on that website), in particular the 'Overview of the Act' section.

**B.** The Government's statutory guidance on domestic abuse aims to ensure that domestic abuse is properly understood and that all public agencies and relevant parties are applying a common definition in seeking to tackle this crime and provide support services to survivors and their children<sup>10</sup>. The guidance is aimed at statutory and non-statutory bodies working with victims and perpetrators and commissioning services, including the police and local authorities. Those to whom the guidance relates must have regard to it in carrying out their functions.

Information and guidance is being prepared in relation to the implementation of new measures under the Domestic Abuse Act. The draft statutory guidance for the police on Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPNs) and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs) is available on the GOV.UK website [here](#).

Multi-agency guidance is also available on [forced marriage](#) and [FGM](#). There is also free e-learning for professionals on [FGM](#) and [forced marriage](#), and the Government's Forced Marriage Unit holds monthly training workshops for police officers or social workers; 1,537 professionals received training at these workshops and bespoke events in 2022. There is also statutory guidance for the police about [stalking protection orders](#).

The College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice for policing areas about VAWG contains national advice for police forces in England and Wales. In addition, the newly developed national policing strategy for VAWG, with an accompanying action plan, is currently being driven by a new national VAWG Taskforce around three pillars of work: building trust and confidence in policing, relentless pursuit of perpetrators and creating safer spaces. Activities include knowledge sharing events, identifying smarter practice, conferences, monitoring performance frameworks and developing learning.

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<sup>10</sup> [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The CPS recognises VAWG as a form of discrimination against women and a fundamental issue of human rights arising from inequality between the sexes. The CPS [Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) Strategy](#) provides a framework outlining the approach taken to these crimes. The CPS will publish a new VAWG strategy in summer 2023.

The CPS's [prosecution guidance](#) aims to assist Crown Prosecutors in applying the Code for Crown Prosecutors when exercising prosecutorial discretion in their decision making. The guidance ensures that decisions are fair, transparent, and consistent.

CPS legal guidance assists prosecutors when they are making decisions about cases. It is regularly updated to reflect changes in law and practice. There is specific legal guidance for VAWG related offences. The CPS published a new [domestic abuse policy](#) and [prosecution guidance](#) in December 2021. The CPS also has numerous [national protocols and agreements](#) for VAWG-related offences including so-called honour-based abuse, rape and sexual offences, and stalking or harassment offences.

In **Wales**, related statutory guidance on commissioning can be found [here](#).

The implementation of legislation in **Scotland** can be supported by Scottish Government Guidance to assist with interpretation which can be statutory in nature. The Scottish Government provided £825,000 to Police Scotland to deliver training on the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act. Police Scotland introduced a programme of change entitled Domestic Abuse Matters (Scotland), seeking to continually improve the response to domestic abuse and support implementation. 14,000 officers and staff have received specialist training to spot the signs of coercive and controlling behaviour. 18,500 officers and staff have also completed online learning about the new legislation and domestic abuse. Police Scotland have a new [VAWG strategy](#) and there is also a joint protocol between Police Scotland and the Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), which prosecutes criminal cases, on challenging domestic abuse.

The COPFS developed an in house package of training for prosecutors, including workshop training and self-completion e-learning on the new legislation, to help prosecutors understand and appreciate the dynamics of controlling relationships.

The Judicial Institute for Scotland also launched interactive blended training for all sheriffs and judges to support the implementation of the Act.

The Scottish Women's Rights Centre (SWRC) launched a training video for solicitors, which discusses the benefits of a trauma-informed practice when working with those who have experienced domestic abuse.

In order to continue to raise awareness of the new legislation the Scottish Government worked with SafeLives to develop a new online resource (Domestic Abuse Awareness Raising Tool (DAART)) for professionals and public bodies to help support people experiencing, or at risk of, domestic abuse.

Additionally, guidance and pathways such as the [Healthcare professionals - supporting adults who present having experienced rape or sexual assault: clinical pathway](#) - reflects existing legislation relevant to forensic medical services and is complementary to the Scottish Government's aims to address VAWG.

There is also statutory guidance for forced marriage and multi-agency guidance for FGM.

In **Northern Ireland**, Explanatory Notes (ENs) accompany legislation which assist with interpretation.

Guidance on the provisions of the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) 2022 Act is currently under development by the Department of Justice and will be provided to relevant operational partners responsible for delivery.

[Statutory guidance](#) is available in relation to the new domestic abuse offence. A global e-learning package on domestic abuse and the new offence was made available from 2021 with the introduction of that offence. This is available across the public sector as well as to statutory and voluntary sector partners. Both police and the Public Prosecution Service have undertaken an extensive range of training in this area.

Considerable training has been undertaken within the PSNI in the last 12 months to better understand and support VAWG-related offences including domestic abuse and stalking. This has included training in coercive controlling behaviour and understanding the barriers to reporting and the impact of domestic abuse from a victim-centred approach. This four module training package has been completed by circa 6,500 people across the organisation, and a similar stalking module has been undertaken by 4,600 people. The service is in the final stages of launching a training package to support the introduction of the non-fatal strangulation offence, rape myths and organisational cultural change.

**C.** There are a range of civil measures in place to support victims of VAWG such as Domestic Violence Protection Orders, Sexual Risk Orders, Non-Molestation Orders, Occupation Orders, FGM Protection Orders, Forced Marriage Protection Orders, Sexual Harm Prevention Orders and Stalking Protection Orders.

It is open to victims who consider that state authorities have failed to take necessary preventive or protective measures to bring a claim for damages against them under the civil law of negligence.

**Civil remedies applied for and orders made in 2022**

|   | Applications Made    | Orders Made |
|---|----------------------|-------------|
| Domestic Violence Remedies                        | 36,858               | 38,475      |
| Non-molestation                                   | 30,952               | 36,379      |
| Occupation  | 5,906                | 2,096       |
| Forced Marriage Protection                        | 266                  | 346         |
| Female Genital Mutilation                         | 54                   | 71          |
| Domestic Violence protection notice <sup>11</sup> | NA <sup>12</sup>     | 11,336      |
| Domestic Violence protection order <sup>13</sup>  | 10,849 <sup>14</sup> | 10,167      |

5,753 Sexual Harm Prevention Orders were imposed between April 2021 and March 2022.

Breach of a non-molestation order (NMO) is a criminal offence. For the year ending December 2021, there were 2,812 proceedings for breaches of NMOs, 2,934 ended in convictions and 2,927 people were sentenced for breaches of NMOs<sup>15</sup>, with 93% being male defendants.<sup>16</sup>

Data on the numbers of stalking protection orders (SPOs) applied for and granted in 2022 are not currently available, but between February and December 2021, 434 orders were applied for and 540 granted.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>11</sup> [Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#): November 2022: Table 2

<sup>12</sup> Not all police forces could provide details on DVPOs applied for, which is why this is not available.

<sup>13</sup> Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk): November 2022: Table 2

<sup>14</sup> Caution should be taken when using this data as the figures are not completely robust: some forces only provided partial DVPOs applied for, so this figure should be used with caution.

<sup>15</sup> The latter two figures are higher than the first because proceedings for some of those convicted and sentenced will have begun in an earlier time period.

<sup>16</sup> Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk): November 2022: Table 17

<sup>17</sup> Both figures include both full and interim orders. Figures for applications and grants are not directly comparable.

Data relating to NMOs and occupation orders is published quarterly on the [GOV.UK website](#).

In **Scotland**, a victim of abuse or an individual at risk of abuse can seek one of the following types of court order against the perpetrator or potential perpetrator:

- an *interdict* forbids or prohibits a course of action. These are the most commonly sought civil protection measure. Under the [Protection from Abuse \(Scotland\) Act 2001](#), the court can apply a power of arrest if the purpose of the order is to protect the applicant from abuse. This means that the police can arrest the interdicted person on suspicion of breaching the interdict. The breach of an interdict or an interim interdict (a temporary “emergency” interdict) which the court determines is a ‘domestic abuse’ interdict is an offence under the [Domestic Abuse \(Scotland\) Act 2011](#).
- a civil *non-harassment order* under the [Protection from Harassment Act 1997](#) prohibits conduct which causes alarm or distress. The breach of an order is an offence. The court dealing with the action can also grant an interdict or interim interdict.
- An *exclusion order* suspends a spouse’s or civil partner’s (or in some cases, a cohabitee’s) occupancy rights in the family home (see section 4 of the [Matrimonial Homes \(Family Protection\) \(Scotland\) Act 1981](#) and section 104 of the [Civil Partnership Act 2004](#)).

As well as such preventative measures a person who has suffered injury or loss as a result of unlawful abuse may be able to secure an order requiring the perpetrator of the abuse to pay compensation by raising a civil action for damages.

The Scottish Government has published annual civil justice statistics at <https://www.gov.scot/collections/civil-justice-statistics/> starting with 2011-2012. Since 2018-2019 the statistics have included data on of all legal remedies (craves) sought at Scottish courts, including craves for interdicts, civil non-harassment orders and exclusion orders. See also Civil Protection Order statistics: [Supporting documents – Civil justice statistics in Scotland 2020-21 – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

In **Northern Ireland**, victims of violence can be issued non-molestation or occupation orders which can give a victim exclusive rights to a residence. They also require abusers not to contact the victim and to stay away from them. Around 3,600 and 3,000 such orders were applied for in 2021 and 2022 respectively. Around 55- 60% of these were granted, with the remainder withdrawn or refused. Breach of either order can result in criminal or other legal sanctions.

**D.** The Sentencing Act 2020 enables courts to impose a compensation order on an offender requiring them to make financial reparation to the victim for any personal injury, loss or damage resulting from the offence. Compensation orders are available for any criminal offence including those established in accordance with the Convention. They must be considered in all eligible cases and the court must give reasons if it decides not to order compensation in such cases.

There is no limit to the amount of compensation that can be imposed on an adult offender as part of a compensation order and, when determining the amount, the court must consider the financial means of the offender. The courts will do everything within their powers to trace those who do not pay, and use a variety of means to ensure the recovery of criminal financial penalties, including compensation orders.

The Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 made it an obligation for courts to consider making a compensation order in all cases involving personal injury, loss or damage, and to give reasons where no such order is made.

Compensation is available to victims injured by violent crime (including sexual assault) in England, Wales or Scotland through the Government-funded Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2012, made under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act 1995. This Scheme is one of last resort and where victims can pursue compensation elsewhere, they should do so.

The data requested on compensation is not available.

In **Scotland**, a person who has suffered injury or loss as a result of unlawful abuse may be able to secure an order requiring the perpetrator of the abuse to pay compensation by raising a civil action for damages.

In **Northern Ireland**, the [Criminal Injuries \(Compensation\) \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1988](#) and the [Criminal Injuries \(Compensation\) \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2002](#) provide for the payment of compensation to, or in respect of, persons who have sustained a criminal injury. Compensation Services process applications and make awards of compensation, free of charge.

**E.** The Children Act 1989 makes provision for courts to make child arrangements orders, which are orders regulating arrangements relating to (a) with whom a child is to live, spend time or otherwise have contact and (b) when a child is to live, spend time or otherwise have contact with any person. The Children Act 1989 states that when making such orders the child's welfare shall be the court's paramount consideration. It also states that the court shall have regard in particular to a list of factors, which include any harm that the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering. The word "harm" is defined in the Children Act 1989 to mean ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

This legislation is underpinned by the Family Procedure Rules 2010 ('the Rules') and accompanying Practice Directions which set out the procedure which must be followed when an application is made to the court for a child arrangements order. In particular, Practice Direction 12J makes detailed provision about cases involving domestic abuse. This includes provision which defines a victim of domestic abuse to include a child who sees, hears or experiences the effects of domestic abuse between two people where the child is related to one or both of them, and emphasises that the court must be satisfied that any contact ordered with a parent who has perpetrated domestic abuse does not expose the child and/or the other parent to an unmanageable risk of harm, and is in the best interests of the child.

When making a child arrangements order, the court has powers to put in place directions or conditions to ensure that any ordered contact proceeds safely. Practice Direction 12J refers to, for example, the court considering:

- whether or not contact should be supervised, and if so, where and by whom;
- whether to impose any conditions to be complied with by the party in whose favour the order for contact has been made and if so, the nature of those conditions, for example by way of seeking advice, treatment or another form of intervention such as requiring a specific programme to be completed (subject to any necessary consent);
- whether such contact should be for a specified period or should contain provisions which are to have effect for a specified period; and
- whether it will be necessary, in the child's best interests, to review the operation of the order.

Where the court does not consider direct contact to be appropriate, Practice Direction 12J notes that it must consider whether indirect contact would be safe or beneficial for the child.

In **Scotland**, section 11 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, which is the key legislation on contact (visitation) and residence (custody), provides that when deciding whether to make an order, and what order to make, the welfare of the child must be the court's paramount consideration. In that assessment the legislation requires the courts specifically to have regard to:

- the need to protect the child from abuse;
- the effect that abuse (including abuse of another person, such as the child's mother), or the risk of such abuse, might have on the child; and
- the effect any such abuse, or the risk of abuse, might have on the ability of a person with responsibilities for the child, such as the child's mother, to fulfil those responsibilities.

When granting a contact order under section 11 the court can order that contact must take place at a child contact centre and that contact is supervised by an independent person to ensure the safety of those involved. Solicitors and individuals can also make referrals to these services.

The Scottish Government is implementing the regulation of child contact centres to help ensure they are safe, child-friendly and conflict-free places. The Scottish Government is putting an independent regulatory body in place to help ensure child contact centre staff are skilled and trained, for example in understanding domestic abuse and coercive control.

In **Northern Ireland**, where a court is considering whether to make a residence or contact order in favour of a prohibited person, it must consider whether the relevant child has suffered or is at risk of suffering any harm through seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person by the prohibited person. A person is a prohibited person if either he is, or the court considers that he should be, subject to a non-molestation order. The court also must have regard to any conviction of the person for a domestic abuse offence involving the child or an offence of any kind aggravated by domestic abuse.

When making contact orders, the court will consider both the handover arrangements and the overall arrangements for contact. If there are any concerns, the court may direct the use of child contact centres or provide for supervised contact.

With regard to residence orders, the court will also consider all of the issues and in relation to both residence and contact, the welfare of the child is paramount.

A parent may apply for a non-molestation order to stop or prevent a particular respondent from using violence, threatening violence or abusing the applicant and any child(ren) of the household. A victim may also apply for an occupation order, which states who may occupy a property, and which may either be stand-alone or associated with a non-molestation order.

In private law applications taken by an adult, the court can give consideration to all reported incidents of violence against women in the determination of residence/custody of children and what nature and level of contact should occur between a father/partner – in determining this the court will use the Children (Northern Ireland) 1995 principle that the welfare of the child is paramount as the superseding concern. Social welfare reports prepared by Health and Social Care Trusts' (HSCT) Children's Social Care Teams are frequently directed by the court to assist it to make such decisions.

Similarly, in public law applications made by HSCTs' Children's Social Care Teams to the Family Proceedings Court or the Family Care Centre (High Court), when they have concerns about children's welfare, information will be provided in relation to reported or suspected incidents of violence against women in the determination of whether a court needs to make an order to enable a HSCT to afford protection and support as necessary to any such child.

In both the above instances the court will include consideration of the appropriateness of contact arrangements, the nature and frequency of such contact and whether that contact needs to be supervised.

If it does need to be supervised the court may order that contact to be supervised by a social worker, a family support worker, a relative who is agreeable to providing the required level of supervision, or at a Contact Centre.

Any order made by the court will be guided by the principle of the welfare of the child(ren) being the court's paramount consideration.

**F.**

| <b>Offence</b>  | <b>Legislation</b>  | <b>Sanctions (information provided shows the <u>maximum</u> sentences available)</b>       |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Psychological violence, as defined in Article 33</b> | <u>England and Wales:</u><br>Section 76, Serious Crime Act 2015<br><br>Section 4, Protection from | <u>England and Wales:</u><br>Up to 5 years' imprisonment.<br>Up to 10 years' imprisonment. |



|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
|  |  | Harassment Act 1997   |   |
|  |  | <u>Scotland</u><br>Where involving partner or ex-partner: Abuse of a partner or ex-partner – section 1 – Domestic Abuse (S) Act 2018. Otherwise, may be prosecuted as ‘threatening or abusive behaviour’ – section 38 – Criminal Justice and Licensing (S) Act 2010   | <u>Scotland</u><br>For domestic abuse offence – up to 14 years’ imprisonment<br><br>For ‘threatening or abusive behaviour’ – up to 5 years imprisonment   |
|  |  | <u>Northern Ireland</u><br>The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act 2021 created a domestic abuse offence which criminalises psychological violence.  | <u>Northern Ireland</u><br>On conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 14 years or a fine or both; or on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or a fine or both.                    |
| <b>Stalking, as defined in Article 34</b>          |  | <u>England and Wales</u><br>Section 4A, Protection from Harassment Act 1997   | <u>England and Wales</u><br>Up to 10 years’ imprisonment.   |
|  |  | <u>Scotland</u><br>Stalking – section 39 – Criminal Justice and Licensing (S) Act 2010  | <u>Scotland</u><br>Up to 5 years’ imprisonment  |
|  |  | <u>Northern Ireland</u><br>Section 1, Protection from Stalking Act (Northern Ireland) 2022  | <u>Northern Ireland</u><br>On conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years or a fine or both; or on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or a fine or both.                    |
| <b>Physical violence, as defined in Article 35</b> |  | <u>England, Wales and Northern Ireland</u><br>The common law offences of murder and manslaughter.<br>- Grievous bodily harm (GBH) with intent: section 18 of the Offences Against the Person Act (OAPA) 1861.<br>- GBH: section 20 of the OAPA 1861.<br>- Actual bodily harm (ABH): section 47 of the OAPA 1861<br>- Strangulation and suffocation, Section 75A, Serious Crime Act 2015 | <u>England, Wales and Northern Ireland</u><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Murder, manslaughter and GBH with intent – life imprisonment.</li> <li>• GBH, ABH and strangulation and suffocation – 5 years’ imprisonment</li> </ul> |
|  |  | <u>Scotland</u><br>Common law assault   | <u>Scotland</u><br>Up to life imprisonment  |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Sexual violence, including rape, defined Article 36, as in</b> | <u>England and Wales</u><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sections 1, 2, 3 and 4 (rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent, respectively) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003</li> </ul>                         | <u>England and Wales</u><br>Rape, and assault by penetration, and causing a person to engage in sexual activity – <i>where penetration is involved</i> : life imprisonment<br><br>Sexual assault and causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent: 10 years' imprisonment       |
|   | <u>Scotland</u><br>Offences at Part 1 of Sexual Offences (S) Act 2009, including rape, sexual assault by penetration, sexual assault and coercing a person to participate in sexual activity<br><br>The Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act maintains the age of consent at 16.                  | <u>Scotland</u><br>Variable – most serious offences up to life imprisonment – rape must be tried in the High Court.  |
|   | <u>Northern Ireland</u><br>Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008  | <u>Northern Ireland</u><br>Rape and assault by penetration – life imprisonment<br>Sexual assault and causing sexual activity without consent – 10 years on indictment. Where the victim is under 13, or has a mental disorder impeding choice, this term is increased to 14 years on indictment. |
| <b>Forced Marriage, as defined Article 37</b>                     | <u>England and Wales</u><br>Subsections 1 and 3 of section 121 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 makes it an offence to force somebody into marriage, and to intentionally lure somebody overseas to force them into marriage, respectively.                        | <u>England and Wales</u><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 years' imprisonment</li> </ul>  |
|   | <u>Scotland</u><br>- Sub-sections 1 and 3 of section 122 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 mirror the provisions of the equivalent sub-sections of section 121 in England and Wales, as above.<br>- Forced Marriage (Protection and Jurisdiction) Scotland Act 2011 | <u>Scotland</u><br>7 years' imprisonment<br><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disobeying a Forced Marriage Protection Order can result in a sentence of up to 2 years in prison and a fine of up to £10,000.</li> </ul>   |
|   | <u>Northern Ireland</u><br>Sub-sections 1 and 5 of section 16 of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) mirrors sub-sections 1 and 3, respectively, of sections 121 and   | <u>Northern Ireland</u><br>7 years' imprisonment.  |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | 122 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, as above.   |   |
| <b>Female Genital Mutilation, as defined by Article 38</b>                | <u>England, Wales, Northern Ireland</u><br>Section 1 of the FGM Act 2003 makes it an offence to carry out FGM on a girl.<br><br>Section 2 of the FGM Act 2003 makes it an offence to aid, abet, counsel or procure a girl to carry out FGM on herself.   | <u>England, Wales, Northern Ireland</u><br>14 years' imprisonment.  |
|   | <u>Scotland</u><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 1, Prohibition of FGM (Scotland) Act 2005 makes it an offence to carry out FGM.</li> <li>Section 3 of the Prohibition of FGM(Scotland) Act 2005 makes it an offence to aid, abet, counsel, procure or incite a person and/or a girl to carry out FGM on herself.</li> </ul>  | <u>Scotland</u><br>14 years' imprisonment.  |
| <b>Forced Abortion and Forced Sterilisation, as defined in Article 39</b> | <u>England and Wales</u><br>The following offences cover both forced abortion and forced sterilisation:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sections 18, 20 and 47 of the OAPA 1861 (see Article 35 entry).</li> <li>Section 23 of the OAPA 1861 (maliciously administering a "noxious thing" (poison, etc), so as to endanger life or inflict GBH</li> <li>Section 24 of the OAPA (maliciously administering a "noxious thing" (poison, etc), so as to injure another person</li> <li>Section 1(1) of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 (child destruction).</li> </ul> | <u>England and Wales</u><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GBH with intent and child destruction offences – life imprisonment.</li> <li>GBH without intent – 5 years</li> <li>ABH – 5 years</li> <li>Maliciously administering poison to endanger life or inflict GBH – 10 years</li> <li>Maliciously administering poison to injure – 5 years</li> </ul> |
|   | <u>Scotland</u><br>Common law offence of assault   | <u>Scotland</u><br>Maximum penalty is life imprisonment   |
|   | <u>Northern Ireland</u><br>Performing abortion or sterilisation without prior and informed consent is not a specific criminal offence. However, the law provides for other sanctions which are set out in Department of Health guidance.   |   |

**G.** There is a civil remedy under section 3 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, which enables victims, where there has been a course of conduct that amounts to harassment, to bring civil proceedings against a perpetrator. Public sexual harassment is also illegal under a range of

existing offences, most commonly section 4A of the Public Order Act 1986 (see [here](#) for details). Sexual harassment in the workplace can also be considered as discriminatory conduct under section 26 of the Equality Act 2010.

In **Scotland**, the Scottish Government recognises that to tackle sexual harassment, the underlying attitudes and inequalities and the culture that perpetuates this behaviour must be tackled. In 2022, [Baroness Kennedy's report](#) on misogyny and criminal justice recommended reforms to the criminal law to address misogyny. These included the creation of a new offence of public misogynistic harassment. As set out in the Programme for Government, the Scottish Government is consulting on specific draft laws with a view to introducing a Misogyny and Criminal Justice Bill later in this Parliament.

There are also a number of existing relevant offences that could, depending on the facts and circumstances of the particular case, be used to prosecute conduct towards women which may arise as a consequence of sexual harassment. The main examples are set out below:

- 'Threatening or abusive behaviour' – section 38, Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010.
- Sexual assault – section 3 – Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act (SOSA) 2009.
- Coercing a person to be present during sexual activity – section 5 – SOSA 2009.
- Coercing a person into looking at a sexual image – section 6 – SOSA 2009
- Communicating indecently – section 7 – SOSA 2009
- Sexual exposure – section 8 – SOSA 2009
- Voyeurism – section 9 – SOSA 2009
- Disclosing, or threatening to disclose, an intimate photograph or film – section 2 – Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016.
- Stalking' – section 39, Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 'Improper use of a public electronic communications network – section 127 – Communications Act 2003.
- Breach of the peace – common law offence
- Threats – common law offence.

In **Northern Ireland**, the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended) makes discrimination and harassment on the grounds of a person's sex unlawful in the areas of employment; training and related matters; education; provision of goods, facilities and services; and the disposal and management of premises.

The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 is the main body of legislation in Northern Ireland used to address and criminalise non-consensual sexual conduct.

The new Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 contains provision which can help address behaviour that may be considered sexual harassment.

**H.** Sections 44 to 46 of the Serious Crime Act 2007 created three offences of intentionally encouraging or assisting an offence; encouraging or assisting an offence believing it will be committed; and encouraging or assisting offences believing one or more offences will be committed.

In **Scotland**, under Scots law, aiding or abetting the commission of any criminal offence, or attempting to commit any criminal offence, is itself a crime.

There is a body of legislation available in **Northern Ireland** which addresses the aiding or abetting of sexual offences:

- The Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 provides for the creation of equivalent 'attempted' offences.
- Section 8 of the Accessories and Abettors Act 1861, section 9 of the Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 and Article 59 of the Magistrates' Courts (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 provide for the creation of equivalent 'aiding and abetting' offences.

I. The offence of attempting to commit an indictable offence is set out in section 1 of the Criminal Attempts Act 1981.

For **Scotland**, please see the response to question H, above.

In **Northern Ireland**, the Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 provides for the creation of the equivalent 'attempted' offences.

Also, section 8 of the Accessories and Abettors Act 1861, section 9 of the Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 and Article 59 of the Magistrates' Courts (Northern Ireland) apply.

J. The legal framework provides no exemption for so called 'honour'-based abuse.

In **Scotland**, it is not a defence to any of the relevant offences that the act amounting to the criminal offence is one that forms part of the accused person's culture, custom, religion or tradition.

The **Northern Ireland** legal framework provides no exemption for so called 'honour based' violence (HBV). Articles 2 and 3 of the ECHR apply to this too.

PSNI Service Procedures pertaining to the police response to HBV state that: "No unjustified distinction should be made by police officers or police staff in responding to HBV incidents or identifying or assessing victims of HBV, on any ground such as sexual orientation, race, colour, language, religious belief, political or other opinion, racial group, age, marital status between men and women generally; between persons with a disability and persons without, or other status."

K. The criminal offences relied upon for compliance with the Convention can be committed regardless of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim.

In **Scotland**, the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim would not affect whether any of the relevant offences have been committed (excepting where it is intrinsic to the offence – e.g. forced marriage or domestic abuse, which applies only where the perpetrator is the partner or former partner of the victim).

In **Northern Ireland**, all the offences in question apply irrespective of the relationship between victim and perpetrator under each respective piece of legislation, notwithstanding those particular instances where similar, or more appropriate, offences require there to be a relationship between victim and perpetrator (e.g. sexual activity with a child family member).

L. Please see answer to question F above.

In relation to monitoring or supervision, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) is the process through which the police, probation and prison services and other agencies work together to manage the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders living in the community in order to protect the public. MAPPA requires local criminal justice agencies and other bodies to work together in partnership in order to protect the public from serious harm. Those monitored are people who are subject to sex offender notification requirements, people who have been convicted of one of a number of specified serious offences and sentenced to a year or more in custody, and other people who have been convicted, cautioned, reprimanded or warned of an offence which indicates that they pose a risk of serious harm to the public and are considered by the relevant agencies to require the active involvement of several agencies via regular multi-agency public protection (MAPP) meetings.

L. 2a) In **Scotland**, Consistent across all forms of violence, perpetrators, on the lawful order of a court, can be monitored or supervised by bodies such as justice social work or Police Scotland. The independent Parole Board can also make provision for supervision as part of a release licence. Some court orders and licences can have electronic monitoring as part of the order or licence, where a curfew can be monitored by means of a radio frequency tag. Those electronic monitoring

services are provided by a private provider, under contract to the Scottish Government, and details of the monitoring are provided to the relevant authority (prison, parole board or court).

In **Northern Ireland**, perpetrators can only be supervised as part of a community-based sentence (Probation Order or Combination Order) or as part of a post custodial license period (Determinate Custodial Sentence, Extended Custodial Sentence, Indeterminate Custodial sentence, Article 26 license or life license). Under the terms of these Court disposals the perpetrators can also be required to undertake certain activities to manage their risk as part of their monitoring and supervision, for example an offending behaviour programme, to reside where directed, to avoid certain areas, to be electronically tagged etc.. If they fail to comply then the Probation service will take the appropriate enforcement action.

**M.** When considering the seriousness of an offence, and the subsequent appropriate sentence, courts must take into account the culpability of the offender and the harm caused or intended. When sentencing, courts must also take into account sentencing guidelines and apply them in individual cases. Guidelines and statute reflect the factors listed in Article 46, namely:

- a. Where the offender abused a dominant position or a position of trust, this is to be considered as an aggravating factor as part of the '*General guideline: Overarching Principles*', potentially leading to a sentence uplift. The general guideline can be applied to sentencing for any offence.
- b. Where an offender is being sentenced for multiple offences, or for multiple instances of an offence, this is taken into account at the point of sentencing in accordance with the '*Totality*' guideline.
- c. d.) e.) Where the victim of crime is vulnerable, an offence was committed in the presence of others (especially children), or the offence was committed as part of a group, this is to be treated as an aggravating factor as per '*General guideline: Overarching Principles*'
- f. Where previous violence was committed as part of domestic abuse, the seriousness of the offence is increased in accordance with the '*Overarching Principles: Domestic Abuse*' guideline. Where an offence was accompanied by violence, this can be accounted for in the consideration of harm caused by the offence for the purpose of sentencing. Alternatively, it can also be treated as an aggravating factor if prior violence led to a conviction.
- g. Where an offence involved the use or threat of a weapon this is to be treated as an aggravating factor as per the '*General guideline: Overarching principles*'.
- h. Physical and/or psychological harm as a result of an offence is taken into consideration when determining the harm caused. A higher degree of harm caused or intended warrants a higher sentence.
- i. Section 65 of the Sentencing Act 2020 states that previous relevant convictions must be treated as an aggravating factor when sentencing.

In **Scotland**, the independent courts take decisions on sentencing in individual cases, taking account of all the facts and circumstances of the case and any relevant sentencing guidelines.

The Scottish Government created the Scottish Sentencing Council, which is independent from the Scottish Government, and came into being in October 2015. Its functions include the creation of sentencing guidelines for particular categories of offence and classes of offender (e.g. young people). The Sentencing Council are currently preparing sentencing guidelines for sexual offences and domestic abuse; more information is on their [website](#).

The circumstances listed in Article 46 may all be taken into consideration in the determination of the sentence either as part of the offence, as an additional offence or as an aggravating factor, whether a statutory aggravation such as the domestic abuse aggravation at section

In **Northern Ireland**, all courts must take into account sentencing guidelines and apply these in individual cases. The sentence granted will be for the judge to determine, taking account of the individual circumstances of the case. As well as Northern Ireland sentencing guidelines the courts in Northern Ireland can also take into account the guidance of the Sentencing Council in England and Wales. Judges can also refer to Court of Appeal judgements to examine how sentences have been reached for similar cases in the past.

The circumstances listed in Article 46 may all be taken into consideration in the determination of the sentence either as part of the offence, as an additional offence or as an aggravating factor in sentencing guidelines.

The domestic abuse offence also has child aggravators associated with it while a domestic abuse aggravator may be applied to any other relevant offences, enabling sentencing to be increased above what it might otherwise have been.

**N.** In terms of the civil law, there is at present no mandatory alternative dispute resolution for civil disputes. However, before a party can issue a claim within the civil courts, they are required to follow pre-action conduct protocols which emphasise that litigation should be a last resort and parties should consider undertaking a form of alternative dispute resolution (such as mediation) to settle or resolve their dispute. Judges in cases managing disputes can encourage or direct that parties consider mediation.

The Government has consulted on, and is considering further, the case for introducing mandatory dispute resolution in lower value civil claims in England and Wales. However, no parties would be required to settle at mediation and access to the courts will remain open to all. A response to this consultation will be published later this year.

Alternative dispute resolution processes are not mandatory in the criminal law. Statute provides for the court to have regard to the means of the offender when imposing a fine.

In **Scotland**, the Scottish Government is opposed to mandatory alternative dispute resolution in cases of gender-based violence. The Scottish Government recognises that there are cases where alternative dispute resolution processes are not appropriate, most notably where there has been domestic abuse, sexual violence or gender-based violence.

Under section 24 of the [Children \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#) the Scottish Government will pilot a scheme of mandatory information meetings about alternative dispute resolution in contact (visitation) and residence (custody) cases. However, proceedings in which there is a proven or alleged history of abuse between some or all of the parties are exempt from the scheme. Any subsequent decision to use alternative dispute resolution remains voluntary. There is no requirement for a couple to have undertaken mediation or another form of alternative dispute resolution before a divorce or dissolution can be obtained under the [Divorce \(Scotland\) Act 1976](#) or the [Civil Partnership Act 2004](#).

New court rules have been developed by the Family Law Committee of the Scottish Civil Justice Council, for defended family and civil partnership cases in sheriff courts. The new rules will expand the sheriff's ability to refer parties to mediation in all family and civil partnership actions. However, the new rules contain exceptions in relation to cases with allegations of domestic abuse.

**Northern Ireland** does not operate a system of mandatory dispute resolution.

**O.** 1.a) There were 160 and 198 homicides where the victim was female in England and Wales. Between April 2020 and March 2021, and April 2021 and March 2022, respectively.

b) This information is not available in England and Wales.

2. a) This information is not published or available for all police forces in England and Wales.

b) This information is not available in England and Wales.

Police data disaggregated by sex, age, relationship and disability is not publicly available. The data presented is for all victims of VAWG related crimes regardless of sex.

#### Number of offences recorded by police forces in England and Wales

| Crime type      | 2020    | 2021    | 2022    |
|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Sexual offences | 146,886 | 177,646 | 189,731 |
| Stalking        | 81,183  | 115,310 | 115,708 |

|            |         |         |         |
|------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Harassment | 212,327 | 250,312 | 259,054 |
|------------|---------|---------|---------|

| Crime type                 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|
| Domestic abuse flagged     | 845,734 | 910,980 |
| Honour based abuse flagged | 2,725   | 2,887   |

Please also see the data in Appendix A, Table 6.

The remaining information requested in the above questions is not available.

## Scotland

1 (a) In 2018/19 there were 16 female victims of homicide (including murder and culpable homicide), in 2019/20 there were 19, in 2020/21 there were 10 and in 2021/22 there were 16. Source: Homicide in Scotland 2021-22 – gov.scot ([www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot))

2 (a) to note data identifying female victims of attempted murder is not held.

3 (a) In 2019/20 there were 1,577 crimes recorded by the police under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 where the victim was female, in 2020/21 there were 1,545 and in 2021/22 there were 1,627.

In 2018/19 there was 1 crime of FGM recorded in Scotland, in 2019/20 there were 2 and in 2020/21 and 2021/22 there were none.

In 2018/19 there were 1,835 reported crimes of rape and attempted rape of females, in 2019/20 there were 1,676, in 2020/21 there were 1,680 and in 2021/22 there were 1,959.

In 2018/19 there were 2,579 reported crimes of sexual assault of females, in 2019/20 there were 2,458, in 2020/21 there were 2,067 and in 2021/22 there were 2,978.

In **Northern Ireland**, verified data is not yet available in relation to the domestic abuse offence that was introduced in 2021. Otherwise:

1a: There were three such cases in 2020 and four in 2021.

1b: This information is not known.

1c: Three perpetrators were convicted in 2020 and three in 2021.

1d: In 2020 periods of imprisonment ranged between 10 and 16 years, and in 2021 between 18 and 21 years.

2a: There were fewer than three such cases in 2020 and fewer than three in 2021.

2b: This information is not known.

2c: Fewer than three perpetrators were convicted in 2020, and none in 2021.

2d: In 2020, community sentence. In 2021, this information is not known.

3(a-f): This may be sourced from the PSNI. Victim data is not held in prosecutions and convictions datasets, so it is not possible to provide this information without a manual trawl of cases, which would be cost-prohibitive.

(Notes in relation to the above information:

- Figures relate to initial disposals at court. Appeals are not included.
- Figures for cases resulting in the death of a woman include both murder and manslaughter offences.
- Figures relate to cases dealt with at courts in 2020 and in 2021.)

**P.** In **Scotland**, a Taskforce has been established to lead the development of Scotland's first national multi-agency Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) model. The aim of DHRs is to work with relevant agencies where a victim and/or perpetrator have come into contact with services, to learn from the circumstances of domestic abuse-related homicides. DHRs aim to identify and respond to the risks associated with abuse and homicide, and find areas for improvement to prevent further deaths.

## VI. Investigation, prosecution and procedural law and protective measures

**A.1.** The police have a number of tools at their disposal to immediately support and protect victims. Police respond to 999 calls when a victim is in immediate danger and can make use of civil orders



to prevent contact between victim and perpetrator, such as Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Orders, and SPOs.

The police response is monitored by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services. This is achieved through regular inspections of individual forces, as well as thematic inspections on particular issues, such as domestic abuse or stalking. Police forces are also accountable to PCCs. In 2023 VAWG was added to the Strategic Policing Requirement, which represents the Home Secretary’s view of what the national threats are and what are the appropriate national capabilities required to counter those threats.

In addition, Operation Soteria is an ambitious joint policing and CPS programme to develop new national operating models for the investigation and prosecution of rape, which will be available to all police forces in England and Wales soon. It aims to transform the way rape investigations are handled, with a focus on the suspect rather than the victim.

In **Scotland**, Police Scotland have committed to leading and contributing to a culture which stops seeing acts of violence, abuse or harassment as an inevitable part of being a woman through their [Violence against Women and Girls Strategy](#).

Police Scotland has offered greater scope for new initiatives to be developed with statutory partners and the third sector such as the pilot to visually record rape complainers’ initial statement to the police and provide immediate referrals to an advocacy worker to support victims. These pre-recorded statements may be used as evidence in chief in any subsequent trial, avoiding the need for victims to go through potentially traumatising evidence in court. The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 has provided additional levers for enforcement agencies in terms of gathering evidence to provide the full picture of offending behaviour that accurately reflects the victims’ evidence.

Police Scotland’s Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse aims to tackle and prevent domestic abuse by providing individuals with the right to ask police about a partner’s background, if they suspect they have a history of domestic abuse.

His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) provides independent scrutiny of both Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA). A domestic abuse inspection was undertaken in January 2023 to assess the state, efficiency and effectiveness of Police Scotland’s response to domestic abuse, with a focus on the user experience of victims. [HMICS | HMICS Thematic Inspection of Domestic Abuse Phase 1](#)

#### **A.2. Number of offences assigned a charge outcome by police forces in England and Wales**

| Crime type      | 2020   | 2021   | 2022   |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Sexual offences | 12,304 | 10,873 | 14,511 |
| Stalking        | 5,415  | 6,975  | 8,225  |
| Harassment      | 15,322 | 11,412 | 11,529 |

#### **Number of domestic abuse-related offences charged by the CPS in England and Wales**

| Crime type             | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
|------------------------|---------|---------|
| Domestic abuse flagged | 50,838  | 43,836  |

In **Scotland**, while the Scottish Government publish data on both recorded crime and criminal proceedings these are based on distinct and unlinked data sets. These do not include information on arrests made nor individual charges brought. [The Recorded Crime in Scotland statistical bulletin](#) is based on a simple count of the numbers of crimes and offences for each local authority, which the police have recorded and cleared up. The [Criminal Proceedings in Scotland bulletin](#) presents statistics on people proceeded against in Scottish criminal courts by main charge.

For **Northern Ireland**, please see Appendix A, Table 4.

**B.** The College of Policing has published an evaluation of the Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA) tool, which was piloted to improve recognition of controlling or coercive behaviour and provide a more structured method of obtaining information to assess the threat posed by the perpetrator. The College and the National Police Chiefs' Council have now advised that this is the tool for use by all frontline officers when conducting risk assessment at domestic abuse incidents. Forces are at various stages of implementing the use of the tool.

In **Scotland**, MARACs are recognised nationally as best practice for addressing cases of domestic abuse that are categorised as visible high-risk of serious harm or homicide. 32 MARACs are available across all 29 local authority areas in Scotland.

Police Scotland use a domestic abuse risk assessment tool as part of an approach to respond to those at the highest risk of physical harm, to prevent domestic homicides. The tool is also used by many organisations and specialist domestic abuse services in Scotland, including through all 32 MARACs.

The Domestic Abuse Awareness Raising Tool (DAART) is an online resource for all professionals which provides an overview of the main considerations when responding to domestic abuse including coercive control.

**C.1.** The police can issue a Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN), and the court can issue a Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO), as an emergency barring order. Both were rolled out across all 43 police forces in England and Wales from March 2014. DVPOs are a civil order that fills a "gap" in providing protection to victims by enabling the police and magistrates' courts to put in place protective measures in the immediate aftermath of a domestic violence incident where there is insufficient evidence to charge a perpetrator and provide protection to a victim via bail conditions.

A DVPN is an emergency non-molestation and eviction notice which the police can issue to a perpetrator when attending to a domestic abuse incident. Since the DVPN is a police-issued notice, it is effective from the time of issue, thus giving the victim the immediate support they require. Within 48 hours of the DVPN being served on the perpetrator, an application by police to a magistrates' court for a DVPO must be heard. A DVPO can prevent the perpetrator from returning to a residence and from having contact with the victim for up to 28 days. This allows the victim a degree of breathing space to consider their options with the help of a support agency. Both the DVPN and DVPO contains a condition prohibiting the perpetrator from molesting the victim. Breach of a DVPO is not a criminal offence.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has introduced new DAPNs and DAPOs, which will offer more flexible and longer-term protection to victims. DAPNs and DAPOs will be piloted from spring 2024, and once fully rolled out DVPNs and DVPOs will be repealed. Breach of a DAPO will be a criminal offence.

Legal aid is available for victims of domestic abuse seeking DAPNs and DAPOs.

In **Scotland**, where the police suspect someone of domestic abuse, they have a power to detain a suspect prior to charge, or to release on undertakings, which may include a requirement that the accused does not approach the residence of the complainer or do anything else to harm or intimidate them. Equally, where the suspect is charged, the court can make it a condition of bail that an accused cannot return to the complainer's home or otherwise interfere with or intimidate the complainer. When the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021 comes into effect, Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPNs) will be able to be made by senior members of Police Scotland. They will be a short-term way to offer immediate protection from domestic abuse. Where Police Scotland make a DAPN, they will then apply to the court for a Domestic Abuse Protection Order (DAPO) which can provide protection to a person at risk of domestic abuse for up to three months.

In **Northern Ireland**, non-molestation and occupation orders can be made *ex parte* when there has been a recent (within the past seven days) incident of violence, abuse or threat and the applicant requires urgent protection.

## C.2.

- a. See question 1, above.
- b. DVPOs can be in place for 28 days and are designed to give the victim breathing space from the perpetrator.
- c. Notices cannot be extended. Within 48 hours the notice must become an order.
- d. DVPNs and DVPOs apply to all victims of domestic violence or those who are at risk of domestic violence.
- e. and f. Any breach of a DVPN or DVPO will be logged by the police. However, breach is not a criminal offence. Breach of a DVPO will be added to the perpetrator's police record.
- g. Police are encouraged to signpost victims to domestic abuse services and independent domestic violence advisors.

From spring 2024, the Government will pilot a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice (DAPN) and Domestic Abuse Protection Order (DAPO). The DAPO's aim is to be the go-to protective order for domestic abuse and provide protection for all forms of domestic abuse as defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. DVPNs and DVPOs will be repealed upon national rollout. Other existing protective orders, such as NMOs and Restraining Orders, will remain in place so that they can continue to be used in cases which are not domestic abuse-related. The new orders will be available in all court jurisdictions, and police, victims and third parties will be able to apply for them. The DAPO can also be applied for alongside criminal investigations and as a tool for protection. Breach of a DAPO will be a criminal offence and there will be no maximum or minimum duration. In addition, the court will be able to impose positive requirements (namely referrals to a perpetrator behaviour change or substance misuse programme) and electronic monitoring (i.e. tagging), alongside prohibitions such as mandating that the perpetrator does not contact the victim.

## Northern Ireland

- a. A non-molestation or occupation order issued *ex parte* (i.e. 'without notice') takes effect once served.
- b. and c. An *ex parte* order is effective until there is a full hearing in court. When a court makes an *ex parte* order, it must specify when the full hearing will take place.
- d. There are no exceptions.
- e. and f. A respondent who has been served with a non-molestation and/or occupation order can be prosecuted under the criminal law for any breaches of the order.
- g. Support and advice are provided by bodies such as the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships and stakeholder and civil society organisations.

## C.3.

- a. 1,336 DVPNs and 10,167 DVPOs were granted in England and Wales.
- b. and c. Breach is not a criminal offence, therefore, this data is not recorded for DVPNs and DVPOs.

Statistics on NMOs are published quarterly and are available [here](#).

## Northern Ireland

Data on Non-Molestation and Occupation Orders is in Appendix A, Table 4.

**D.** Existing legislation makes provision for a variety of protective orders, as listed in Part V, C, which may be made by civil (including the family court) or criminal courts. These orders can apply to victims of all of the types of violence covered by the Convention. All can be applied for on an *ex parte* basis, i.e. 'without notice' to the respondent, and can take immediate effect. The orders may be made for a specified period (sometimes subject to a minimum duration condition)<sup>18</sup> or until a further order is made.

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<sup>18</sup> Two years in the case of SPOs and SROs, five years in the case of Sexual Harm Prevention Orders

Individuals applying for protective orders in the family court are exempt from paying court fees. Fees are also not applied in any proceedings relating to protection measures if the person who would otherwise be liable to pay is the protected person. Legal aid is available for the purpose of obtaining urgent protective injunctions.

Restraining orders are available on conviction for any criminal offence under section 360 of the Sentencing Act 2020 or on acquittal of a criminal offence under section 5A of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. The guiding principle is that there must be a need for the order to protect a person or persons. A restraining order is therefore preventative, not punitive. They can be made only against the offender (not the victim or any witness). For a restraining order on conviction, [section 360 of the Sentencing Act 2020](#) provides that a court (in the course of dealing with an offender) may make a restraining order for the purpose of protecting the victim or victims from any future criminal offence, or to protect any other person mentioned in the order from conduct which amounts to harassment, or which will cause fear of violence. They can be made for a specified period or on some occasions can be put in place indefinitely. For a restraining order on acquittal, [section 5A of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997](#) provides that a court may make a restraining order if it considers it is necessary to protect a person from harassment by the defendant. Breach of a restraining order can result in a maximum penalty of up to five years' imprisonment.

NMOs are available under section 42 of the Family Law Act 1996 and are made by the family court to prohibit an individual from 'molesting' another person to whom they are associated or a relevant child. They are applied for by victims of domestic abuse who are (or were) in a specified relationship with the person from whom they wish to be protected. The Act does not define 'molesting' or 'molestation' but the term implies deliberate conduct which is aimed at a high degree of harassment, so as to justify intervention of the court. Often an order is sought to protect individuals from the harm of domestic abuse. They can, where necessary, extend to protect relevant children. Breach of a NMO is a criminal offence.

Non-molestation applications are either made 'without notice' to the perpetrator (i.e. the victim's application is heard at court before the perpetrator has been made aware of the application), usually if the victim is seeking immediate protection, or 'on notice' (i.e. the application and confirmation of the hearing date will be served on the respondent, who may choose to serve a response or make their own cross-application for an order).

Forced marriage protection orders (FMPOs) are available under section 63A of the Family Law Act 1996, while FGM Protection Orders (FGMPOs) are available under section 5A and Schedule 2 of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. These orders are civil court orders and can be made by the court with the purposes of protecting or preventing someone from being subjected to FGM or forced marriage. They can be applied for by the person who is to be protected, a local authority, or any other party with the court's permission, and in certain cases the court may issue an order on its own initiative. The court can make an order which prohibits, requires, restricts or includes any other such other terms as it considers appropriate to stop or change the behaviour or conduct of those who would seek to subject a person to, or have already arranged or committed, forced marriage or FGM. Such orders can be made alongside other protective orders and are made irrespective of other legal proceedings.

Orders may also be made against people who are not named in the application. This is in recognition of the complexity of the issues and the numbers of people who might be involved in the wider community. Breach of both these orders is a criminal offence, with a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment.

SPOs may be applied for by the police to the magistrates' court, and can be issued by the court to people who have carried out acts associated with stalking and pose a risk associated with stalking to another person, if there is reasonable cause to believe that an order is necessary to protect another person from such a risk. They can be applied for irrespective of other legal proceedings. Breach is a criminal offence, with a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment.

The police may apply to the magistrates' court for a Sexual Risk Order (SRO) in respect of an individual who has done an act of a sexual nature and who poses a risk of harm to the public, even if they have not been convicted of an offence. This is irrespective of other legal proceedings. Breach is a criminal offence with a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment.

Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs) are intended to protect the public from offenders convicted of a sexual or violent offence and who pose a risk of sexual harm to the public. They can be made either by a court when it deals with the defendant following a conviction for a specified offence or in some specific cases in case of acquittal, or on a freestanding application made to a magistrates' court by the police in respect of a defendant with a previous conviction (or acquittal in one of the specific cases) for a specified offence. Breach is a criminal offence with a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment.

When an order may be applied for by the victim, advice is made available – please see: <https://www.gov.uk/injunction-domestic-violence>, <https://www.gov.uk/apply-forced-marriage-protection-order> and <https://www.gov.uk/female-genital-mutilation-protection-order>.

The Civil Protection Measures Regulation is an EU Regulation which provides for a protection measure ordered in an EU member state to be recognised automatically and to be enforceable in another member state without any further procedure being required. The UK has continued to operate the procedures in this Regulation unilaterally since EU-Exit, recognising incoming protection measures issued in EU member states.

### **Scotland**

1. Sexual Offences Prevention Orders (SOPOs) are preventative orders designed to protect the public (including women) from sexual harm. On 31 March 2023 the Scottish Government introduced the Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO) which replaced SOPOs. These orders are for the protection of the public including women.
2. SOPOs/SHPOs are preventative orders which specifically deal with risk of sexual harm.
3. No fees are levied – SOPOs/SHPOs are civil/criminal orders applied for either by Police Scotland or issued at the point of sentencing/conviction by the court.
4. As soon as an order is granted by the court it becomes effective from that date.
5. The minimum duration of a SHPO is five years; otherwise it can be for a period of as long as the court determines appropriate in all the circumstances.
6. At point of conviction/sentencing, SOPOs/SHPOs are an additional measure that can be imposed by the courts. Separately the police can apply to the court for these orders under civil procedures.
7. If the 'legal tests' are met for SOPOs/SHPOs, these can be imposed after conviction or sentencing.
8. Breach of a SHPO without reasonable excuse is a criminal offence. An individual convicted of such an offence on summary conviction will be liable to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 12 months or to a fine not exceeding £10,000 or both. An individual convicted on indictment will be liable to a term of imprisonment of up to five years or an unlimited fine or both. (Sanctions for breach of a SOPO are the same, except for six months on summary conviction rather than 12.)
9. Civil orders are not applied for directly by members of the public (including women). They are applied for by the police, or alternatively criminal orders are imposed by the court at point of conviction/sentencing.

In 2019-20 (the most recent data unaffected by the pandemic which is held), 14 people (13 males and one female) were convicted of a main charge of breaching a Domestic Abuse Order (interdict). The median age of a convicted person was 38. Of these, nine were given a community sentence, three a custodial sentence, one a fine and one an admonishment.

### **Northern Ireland**

1. A victim of domestic violence or abuse can apply to a court for a non-molestation order to stop or prevent a particular respondent from using violence, threatening violence or abusing the applicant. A victim may also apply for an occupation order, which states who may occupy a property, and which may either be stand-alone or associated with a non-molestation order.

2. All victims of violence and abuse can apply for a non-molestation order and/or occupation order. The former can apply to an adult and child or children, or to children only.
3. Applicants are eligible for legal aid to cover or part-cover their legal fees incurred in applying for a non-molestation and/or occupation order.
4. Non-molestation and occupation orders issued by a court are effective immediately. Orders issued *ex parte* are effective when served.
5. Non-molestation and occupation orders are typically granted for a maximum of 18 months. Further applications can be made if required.
6. Non-molestation and occupation orders can be applied for in addition to other legal proceedings.
7. If restraining or protection orders they can be introduced in subsequent legal proceedings.
8. Sentences involving statutory supervision that are available to courts include custodial licences, probation orders, combination orders, and enhanced combination orders and a range of conditions can be imposed on each. Probation Officers supervise these sentences where directed by the court. Probation supervises over 4,000 perpetrators who range from low-risk to high-risk and whose crimes may include domestic and sexual violence. Should a perpetrator being supervised by probation breach their conditions, an application will be sought for their recall to prison, or back to court, depending on their sentence and imposed conditions.
9. Legal aid will provide for legal advice, assistance and representation to anyone seeking the protection of a non-molestation order without regard to their means to pay.

**E.** Statistics on the number of NMOs, forced marriage protection orders and FGM protection orders made are published quarterly and are available [here](#) (see “Family Court Tables, October – December 2022”, Tables 15-17). The latest available statistics on breach of these orders (up to 31 December 2022) are obtainable, using the “Outcome by Offence data tool” [here](#).

Data on Stalking Protection Orders for 2020 and 2021 can be found [here](#).

In **Scotland**, Non-harassment Orders can be granted in civil courts or imposed in criminal courts. In 2019-20 one Non-harassment Order was granted in a civil court, where it was the principal crave<sup>19</sup>. Information is not held on the numbers of Non-harassment Orders imposed in criminal courts. 73 Sexual Offences Prevention Orders (SOPOs) were imposed in 2021-22, and 75 in 2022-23.

In 2019-20, 220 people (213 males and seven females) were convicted of breaching a Non-harassment Order previously imposed in the criminal court, where it was the main charge. In the same year 31 people (30 males and 1 female) were convicted of breaching a Non-harassment Order granted in the civil court, where it was the main charge. There were 55 breaches of SOPOs in 2021-22 and 50 in 2020-21.<sup>20</sup>

Of those convicted of breaching a criminal imposed Non-harassment Order, 89 were given a custodial sentence, 45 a Community Payback Order, 42 an admonishment, 25 a fine, 18 a Restriction of Liberty Order, and one a Supervised Release Order, where it was the main punishment. Of those convicted of breaching a Non-harassment Order granted in a civil court, 10 were given a Community Payback Order, nine a custodial sentence, five an admonishment, three a fine and three a Restriction of Liberty Order, where it was the main punishment. This data is not held with regard to SOPOs.

In **Northern Ireland**, data on prosecutions and convictions - including the main disposal imposed - for breach of a Non-molestation Order or breach of Occupancy Order offences, between 2012 – 2021, can be found in Appendix A, Table 5.

**F.** The permission or consent of the victim is not required to commence proceedings. The CPS’s domestic abuse prosecution guidance advises police and prosecutors where possible to develop robust case strategy that is not based on the testimony of victims. This means that, if the victim is

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<sup>19</sup> The principal crave is the first legal remedy requested by the pursuer/petitioner, as stated in the initial writ/summons.

<sup>20</sup> It should be noted when comparing this data with the number of SOPOs imposed, that the number of breaches will include SOPOs imposed prior to these years and still in force.

unable or unwilling to support a prosecution in appropriate circumstances, the case can still proceed.

Given the seriousness of VAWG offending, a prosecution will normally be required when the evidential requirements under the CPS's [Code for Crown Prosecutors](#) are met.

The prosecution strategy should, from the outset, consider the possibility of proceeding without the victim's support or testimony by considering evidence other than that of the victim or adducing evidence under the [res gestae](#) principle.

In **Scotland**, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service is Scotland's independent prosecution service and is headed by the Lord Advocate, Solicitor General and Crown Agent. Prosecutors make decisions independently and in the public interest, following the process set out in the Prosecution Code and any other relevant policy or guidance, for example [this](#).

In **Northern Ireland**, the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPSNI) is the principal prosecuting authority, with responsibility for taking decisions as to prosecution in all cases investigated by the police. Prosecutions are initiated or continued by the PPS only where it is satisfied that the Test for Prosecution is met. This is a two-stage test, comprising an Evidential Test (there has to be sufficient admissible evidence against a clearly identified individual upon which the prosecutor is satisfied that the evidence is sufficient to provide a reasonable prospect of conviction) and then, only once that test is satisfied, there is consideration as to whether prosecution is in the public interest. There is a presumption that the public interest requires prosecution where there has been a contravention of the criminal law. This presumption provides the starting point for consideration of and to weigh relevant public interest factors to determine whether prosecution is in the public interest. Where available, the views of the victim will also be taken into account.

The Code for Prosecutors under Section 37 of the Justice Act (NI) 2002 published by the Director of Public Prosecutions (NI) sets out guidelines on the general principles to be applied in determining in any case whether criminal proceedings should be brought amongst other matters. It sets out a range of factors which should be considered. In deciding whether a prosecution is required in the public interest, prosecutors should take into account the views expressed by the victim and the impact of the offence on a victim and, in appropriate cases, their family, where such views are available.

In November 2022 the PPSNI published a [Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Domestic Abuse - Draft for Consultation](#) as it prepared for the introduction of the new offence of domestic abuse in Northern Ireland created by section 1 of the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021.

**G.** After considering a victim's reasons for retracting their allegation or withdrawal of support, if it is deemed inappropriate to make any applications, including a witness summons, the prosecutor has a duty to review the case and determine if there remains sufficient evidence to prosecute the case.

In **Scotland**, consent of the victim is not required to initiate or continue criminal proceedings. It is understood that for complex reasons victims may disengage from the criminal justice process, seek to retract their statements or withdraw support for a prosecution. While the views of the victim will be taken into account, final decisions on whether to discontinue proceedings are for prosecutors based on an assessment of the public interest.

In **Northern Ireland**, Chapter 3 of the PPSNI Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Domestic Abuse (see F, above) sets out how prosecutors specifically address situations where a complainant withdraws their support from a prosecution, or retracts their allegation. The policy makes clear the importance of understanding the vulnerability of victims and the particular impact that control, coercion and psychological abuse may have on the individual, which can play a part in withdrawal. However, withdrawal or retraction does not mean that the case will be automatically stopped. Paragraphs 3.4.3 to 3.4.9 explain how the prosecution will review both the evidential and the public interest elements of the test for prosecution. The policy includes a non-exhaustive list of factors which are useful when considering the public interest test in a domestic abuse context, but at all times the

safety of the victim, or any other potentially vulnerable person, remains a prime consideration. Where the evidential test for prosecution cannot be met without the victim's live evidence, prosecutors may consider whether it is necessary to issue a witness summons to compel the victim to attend court. This is a last resort – a list of factors that prosecutors will consider when deciding to issue a witness summons is included at Annex B of the Policy, and prosecutors should ensure that all other avenues of evidence have been exhausted as well as make enquiries to satisfy themselves that the safety of the victim, any children and/or other dependants will not be endangered.

**H. Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs)** act as a single point of contact to support the needs of victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. They do not provide legal advice but assist victims with navigating the criminal justice system alongside helping them access other support such as safe accommodation and therapeutic support. They may provide a client with impartial information on the prosecution process and what will happen in the court, such as facilitating pre-trial familiarisation visits or accessing special measures. Some advisers may provide emotional support during trials.

In **Scotland**, the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 provides that vulnerable witnesses are entitled to give evidence with the benefit of having a support present with them in the courtroom (or other location if giving evidence remotely). This includes all child victims and witnesses as well as victims of sexual offences, human trafficking, domestic abuse and stalking. That support person may be a relative, friend, support worker or someone else. In addition, the Witness Service is provided by trained Victim Support Scotland staff and volunteers at all high court and sheriff court locations. They can give practical help and information on what happens at court including conducting court familiarisation visits or virtual tours of courts and acting as an in court supporter for vulnerable witnesses. Supporters for vulnerable witnesses do not participate in proceedings - their role is to offer support to the victim or witness whilst giving evidence.

**I.1.** The Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 introduced special measures which are a range of provisions designed to help vulnerable and intimidated witnesses give their best evidence to the court and mitigate some of the stress associated with giving evidence. Special measures apply to prosecution and defence witnesses and are subject to the discretion of the court, although victims can indicate a preference for which special measures they would like to receive.

For adult witnesses who are eligible for special measures, an application is made to the court for the judge to consider whether the use of special measures will 'maximise the quality of evidence'. Witnesses under the age of 18 are automatically considered for special measures by virtue of section 16 of the YJCEA.

**I.2. [inform women victims of escape/release]** In accordance with the Victims' Code (see section IV (A) above), victims can expect to be protected, including in the unlikely event that the suspect (pre-trial) or offender (following conviction) escapes from custody, where the police should contact the victim. If it is assessed that the suspect or offender poses a significant risk of harm to them, the police will take any necessary measures to ensure their ongoing protection.

Under section 35 of The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, victims of specified offences, including certain serious sexual or violent offences where an offender receives a custodial sentence of 12 months or more, or is detained as a mental health patient, will be referred to the Victim Contact Scheme. The Scheme provides victims with information about the status of the offender including if and when a prisoner is moved to open conditions, and when they are released. When the offender is released, victims can apply for licence conditions preventing contact and setting exclusion zones to reduce the chance of them meeting the offender in the community.

**[enable women victims to be heard].** In accordance with the Victims' Code, victims of crime for all offences should be offered the opportunity to make a Victim Personal Statement, which enables victims to explain in their own words how a crime has impacted them in any way.

**[provide support services]** In accordance with the Victims' Code, victims should be referred to services and have services and support tailored to their needs.



**[ensure contact avoided]** When attending court, and where possible, victims/witnesses will be able to enter through a different entrance to the defendant and wait in a separate waiting area before and after their case has been heard. Some court buildings do not currently have separate entrances for victims/witnesses, however, where informed in advance, His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) staff will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that the victim/witness does not have to see the defendant on arrival.

In relation to the other elements of Article 56, the Victims' Code also provides that victims:

- have the right to access interpretation and translation services;
- have the right to be given information about the investigation and prosecution, trial, trial process and their role as a witness, the outcome of the case and any appeals, and about the offender following a prosecution;
- have the right to have their needs assessed by the police or Witness Care Unit to determine whether they are eligible and would benefit from giving evidence using special measures; and
- are also eligible for a series of Enhanced Rights if they are an intimidated victim.

In **Scotland**, the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014, in conjunction with the Victims' Code for Scotland, sets out the various rights and support services available to victims, including rights to information, protection, protection of privacy and other aspects mentioned in Article 56.

Victims and witnesses are entitled to a certain level of support and information from the organisations they deal with in the criminal justice system. This is set out in the Standards of Service, a document which explains what victims can expect at each stage of the criminal justice process and where they can seek help and advice.

Both criminal and civil courts in Scotland provide a range of special measures, which are provided for in the Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004 and the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995.

In **Northern Ireland**, the Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1999 provides for a number of special measures to assist vulnerable and intimidated witnesses to give their best possible evidence in criminal proceedings. Available measures include video recorded evidence-in-chief; giving evidence by live link; screening the witness from the accused; evidence given in private; removal of wigs and gowns; and the provision of an intermediary to assist witnesses with communication problems.

The Probation Board for Northern Ireland's Victim Information Scheme provides information to registered victims about what it means when someone is sentenced to a Court Order which requires supervision by Probation. The Victim Information Scheme is available to any person (or agreed representative) who has been the direct victim of a criminal offence for which the offender received a Probation Supervised Sentence.

Under the Prisoner Victim Information Scheme victims who are eligible under the Scheme can register to be provided with information on a sentenced prisoner's final discharge from prison or temporary release from prison, including the month and year when their discharge is expected, any conditions of release to be imposed, and any breaches of those conditions which might result in the prisoner's return to custody. For cases referred to the Parole Commissioners for a decision on release, victims can be told the prisoner's case is being considered by the Commissioners, given the opportunity to submit views/concerns, informed of the Commissioner's decision and, if it is to release the prisoner, of the licensing arrangements which apply to that offender.

The Victim Information Unit will explain what the Court Order means and what the individual who has been sentenced must do as a result of the order. This can include explaining the length of the sentence and the type of work they are undertaking as part of the order. The Victim Information Unit can also facilitate restorative interventions at the request of the victim and in appropriate circumstances. This can include indirect restorative shuttle dialogue between the victim and perpetrator. The Unit also works alongside Women's Aid and Victim Support NI.

The Department of Justice (DoJ) has also established a scheme whereby Sexual Offences Legal Advisors (SOLA) provide publicly funded, independent legal advice to adult complainants of serious sexual offences in respect of their Article 8 rights and introduction of their previous sexual history. A key remit of the SOLA is to make representations to PPSNI on behalf of the victim, to ensure that their views and rights are taken into account when it comes to decision making matters. A pilot for children is currently being designed and, subject to funding, will be launched later this year.

The Registered Intermediaries Scheme is available to all victims, witnesses, suspects and defendants who have communication difficulties that could affect their ability to give their best evidence during an investigation or at trial. The function of the Registered Intermediary is to facilitate communication during the police investigation and at trial between the vulnerable witness/defendant and others in the criminal justice process, such as police officers and advocates.

The DoJ provides core funding to victim support services, to provide dedicated support to adult and child witnesses of crime at all stages of the criminal justice system. It also continues to provide support measures for victims and witnesses attending court. These include separate waiting rooms for witnesses at court to limit the possibility of contact between the parties, the availability of dedicated witness support services in the criminal courts, the ability for Women's Aid personnel to support victims of domestic violence attending civil and family courts, and the provision of interpreters for witnesses in cases involving domestic violence. The DoJ has also established a number of Remote Evidence Centres. They provide important additional protections to vulnerable complainants, ensuring that they can give their evidence via live link away from the courthouse in a less daunting environment and where is no chance that they could encounter the accused in the court building.

**1.3.** Under section 16 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act (YJCEA) 1999 witnesses under 18 are eligible for special measures to help them give their best evidence. Before approving the application of special measures, the court must satisfy itself that their use is likely to maximise the quality of the witness's evidence. The measures are:

- **screens** may be made available to shield vulnerable and intimidated witnesses from the defendant, ([s23 YJCEA](#));
- **live links** enable vulnerable and intimidated witnesses to give evidence during the trial from outside the court through a visual link to the courtroom. The witness may be accommodated either within the court building or in a suitable location outside the court, ([s24 YJCEA](#));
- **evidence given in private** (available for some vulnerable and intimidated witnesses): exclusion from the court of members of the public and the press (except for one named person to represent the press) in cases involving sexual offences or intimidation by someone other than the accused, ([s25 YJCEA](#));
- **removal of wigs and gowns by judges and barristers** (available for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses at the Crown Court), ([s26 YJCEA](#));
- **visual recorded interviews** with vulnerable and intimidated witnesses before the trial may be admitted by the court as the witness's evidence-in-chief, for adult complainants in sexual offence trials in the Crown Court. A visual recorded interview will be automatically admissible, upon application, unless this would not be in the interests of justice or would not maximise the quality of the complainant's evidence, ([s27 YJCEA](#)). ([Section 103 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009](#) relaxes the restrictions on a witness giving additional evidence in chief after the witness's visual recorded interview has been admitted.)
- **pre-trial visual recorded cross-examination or re-examination:** a visual recorded examination of the witness recorded at an earlier point in the process than the trial may be admitted by the court as the witness's cross-examination and re-examination evidence in the Crown Court. This can only be applied for where there has been a s27 direction for a visual recorded interview to be admitted as evidence and when a victim or a witness meets the vulnerable criteria. A visual recorded examination will be automatically admissible, upon application, unless this would not be in the interests of justice or would not maximise the quality of the complainant's evidence, ([s28 YJCEA](#)).
- **examination of the witness through an intermediary** (only available for vulnerable witnesses): an intermediary may be appointed by the court to assist the witness to give their evidence at court. They can also provide communication assistance in the investigation stage - approval for admission of evidence so taken is then sought retrospectively. The intermediary is allowed to

explain questions or answers so far as is necessary to enable them to be understood by the witness or the questioner but without changing the substance of the evidence, ([s29 YJCEA](#));

- **aids to communication** may be permitted to enable (only) vulnerable witnesses to give best evidence, whether through a communicator or interpreter, or through a communication aid or technique, provided that the communication can be independently verified and understood by the court, ([s30 YJCEA](#)).

In **Scotland**, standard special measures which child witnesses under the age of 18 have a right to use are: a live television link where the witness is in another part of the court building; a screen; and a supporter. The Children (Scotland) Act 2020 offers further protections for victims and children during the family court process in cases involving domestic abuse.

The Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill, introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 25 April, aims to ensure victims are treated with compassion and their voices are heard by embedding trauma-informed practice across the system and requiring justice agencies to make efforts to reduce re-traumatisation. It will establish an independent Victims and Witnesses Commissioner for Scotland to champion victims' and witnesses' rights. The bill will also safeguard vulnerable parties and witnesses in civil cases through extending special measures and protecting people who have suffered abuse from being cross-examined by their abuser.

In **Northern Ireland**, child victims and witnesses are eligible to avail of the special measures set out in the Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1999. Measures include screening the child witness from the accused, providing evidence by live link in a facility away from the courthouse, judges and barristers removing wigs and gowns, and provision of a Registered Intermediary to assist with communication. These measures make providing evidence less stressful and traumatic.

The Department of Justice also provides core funding to the NSPCC, to provide dedicated support to child witnesses of crime at all stages of the criminal justice system.

A judicial-led voluntary protocol to expedite serious sexual offence cases involving victims and witnesses aged under 13 years is currently in operation across two Crown Court areas in Northern Ireland. It involves all statutory and voluntary partners ensuring that such cases proceed at an enhanced speed and that young victims are fully supported to give their best evidence and reduce additional trauma resulting from an extended court process. The Department is evaluating this protocol and will co-ordinate plans to scope and develop a permanent arrangement, based on the results of the current protocol.

**J.** To protect victims of domestic abuse, legal aid is available in some private family and civil matters, including victims who are experiencing financial abuse, subject to providing the required evidence and meeting the means and merits tests for legal aid.

Legal aid will always remain available for the purpose of obtaining urgent protection, such as NMOs, without any evidence requirements. There is an eligibility waiver in place for victims of domestic abuse applying for an injunction or other protective order, which means they can receive legal aid even if they would not otherwise pass the means test, although they may have to pay a financial contribution towards their legal costs.

The Government has removed the cap on the amount of mortgage debt that can be deducted from a property's value and laid legislation to ensure legal aid is available for domestic abuse victims who are seeking a DAPO.

The Government will shortly announce changes to means testing which will benefit victims of domestic abuse by increasing income thresholds, providing more generous disregards for assets that are unavailable due to abusive relationships (such as increased equity disregards), removing disputed matters from the means test assessment, and introducing provisions to identify inaccessible capital and remove it from the means test.

A victim is not a party to criminal proceedings and there is no provision for legal aid for them in the proceedings.

In **Scotland**, a complainer is not a party to criminal proceedings and there is no provision for legal aid for them in the proceedings. A victim of a crime could access a type of publicly funded legal assistance called 'advice and assistance' (A&A) which is legal advice short of representation, in relation to those proceedings, subject to statutory eligibility tests.

For civil proceedings (e.g. a domestic abuse interdict), a victim may access publicly funded legal assistance (including representation) subject to statutory eligibility tests. In either case, where the individual's financial circumstances fall below a certain threshold, legal assistance will be provided without their being asked to pay a contribution.

The Scottish Government has committed to providing an automatic right to state-funded independent legal representation for complainers when applications are made to lead evidence of their sexual history or 'character' in sexual offence cases. Legislative reforms are proposed under the Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill.

In **Northern Ireland**, specific provision exists, over and above the general entitlement to legal aid, to make legal aid available without a means test to victims who need representation to secure a non-molestation order, or to defend proceedings brought against them by an abusive partner for contact with children, and for certain other related proceedings.

**K.** In **Scotland**, as briefly discussed above, the [Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform \(Scotland\) Bill](#), introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 25 April, aims to improve the experiences of victims, witnesses and vulnerable parties in the justice system, ensuring that their voices are heard. The bill aims to:

- Ensure victims are treated with compassion and their voices are heard;
- Ensure justice meets the needs of survivors of sexual offences, the majority of whom are women and girls; and
- Ensure Scotland's laws and legal processes meet the needs of modern Scotland and enable public confidence in the justice system.

## **VII. Migration and asylum**

**A.** N/A. The UK has applied a reservation on Article 59.

**B.1.** It does: the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 defined key concepts of the Refugee Convention, including particular social group, evidencing that the UK continues to be committed to upholding the rights of refugees, including those at risk of sex-based harm, in line with its international obligations. [Part 11 of the Immigration Rules](#) sets out the provisions for considering asylum claims and reflects the UK's obligations, including in relation to the limb of the Refugee Convention which relates to particular social groups. The [Gender issues in the asylum claim policy guidance](#) provides more detail on how sex-based violence is considered when assessing asylum claims.

**B.2.** All asylum claims lodged in the UK, including those submitted by women on grounds of sex-based persecution, are carefully considered in accordance with the UK's obligations under the Refugee Convention and ECHR. The Government is committed to treating all those who seek refuge with dignity and respect, and all decision-makers receive mandatory training on managing and considering cases sensitively.

All decision-makers must follow published Home Office policy guidance, including specific guidance on gender issues, which covers specific forms of sex-based persecution. This guidance is available on the GOV.UK website, [here](#).

In considering asylum claims all available evidence is carefully and sensitively considered against published country information, which covers country-specific issues relating to sex-based harm, including FGM, sexual exploitation, violence in conflict and domestic violence.

**B.3.** Data is not currently available which enables it to be broken down to this level of detail. Asylum claims statistics which are available disaggregated by sex are publicly available on GOV.UK, [here](#).

**B.4.** Data is not currently available which enables it to be broken down in this level of detail. Statistics which are available disaggregated by sex and the protection status granted are publicly available in the link in question 3, above.

**C.** Asylum accommodation providers are contractually required to take specific account of sex-specific accommodation needs and the particular needs of victims of domestic and sex-based violence in order to provide for their safety and wellbeing.

The Government has taken steps to ensure the asylum system is gender-sensitive, including sex-specific guidance to ensure such issues are properly considered in a sensitive and appropriate way. This is reinforced by mandatory training on considering asylum claims, which includes training and mentoring on conducting interviews. This enables decision-makers to interview vulnerable persons effectively and take account of the impact of trauma and memory loss. The Government works closely with external partners, to develop guidance and training on these important issues. It has worked with partners on the provision of sex-specific interviewers and interpreters.

The Home Office has published policy guidance, "[Gender issues in the asylum claim](#)", which refers to Article 60 of the Istanbul Convention. This guidance must be followed by asylum decision makers. It states that asylum decision makers must:

- carefully consider whether protection is needed because of sex-related persecution or serious harm, and that gender must inform the assessment of whether one or more of the five Refugee Convention reasons may be applicable; and
- ensure that the asylum process is sex-sensitive throughout.
- That guidance also contains instruction on sex-sensitive interview procedures and safeguarding.

**D.** When an individual's asylum claim is refused, it is considered whether they are in need of humanitarian protection (protection for a non-Refugee Convention reason) and whether being required to leave the UK would breach their ECHR rights. Those found not to need protection are refused, and the decision can be subject to legal challenge where appropriate either via appeal to the independent courts or through a judicial review, depending on the decision in question. Nobody found to be at risk of serious harm will be returned to their country of origin.

**E.** The Nationality and Borders Act 2022 defined key concepts of the Refugee Convention, including particular social group, evidencing that the UK continues to be committed to upholding the rights of refugees, including those at risk of sex-based harm, in line with its international obligations.

In April 2021, the Government launched a Support for Migrant Victims (SMV) Scheme pilot to provide a support net for migrant victims of abuse with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). The 12-month pilot, run by Southall Black Sisters and their delivery partners, and supported with £1.4 million of Government funding, has provided wraparound support services for migrant victims of domestic abuse, including accommodation, subsistence, counselling and legal advice. During the pilot the scheme supported 425 migrant victims. The Government is providing a further £1.4 million in 2023/24 to continue to fund the scheme, ensuring support is maintained for migrant victims of domestic abuse.

In **Wales**, the Live Fear Free Helpline's staff have received specialist training on victims with NRPF and have set procedures to ensure these survivors receive the appropriate advice and options. Following its inquiry into VAWDASV impacting migrant women, the Equality and Social Justice (ESJ) Committee of the Senedd Cymru made 15 recommendations to the Welsh Government to improve the experiences of victims of gender-based violence with NRPF. The Welsh Government considered these recommendations, and accepted, wholly or in principle, all 15. One recommendation focused on the establishment of a crisis fund that service providers can access to support migrant women who are victims or survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and who are subject to NRPF. Action on this recommendation has been prioritised.

30 June 2023



## APPENDIX A

**Table 1: Initial training (education or professional training)**

Where this information is available, it appears in the table or, if it sits better there, in the relevant place in the earlier narrative. Where the data appears in neither the table nor the narrative, it is not available.

|   | PREVENTION AND DETECTION OF VIOLENCE  | STANDARDS OF INTERVENTION | EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN  | NEEDS AND RIGHTS OF VICTIMS  | PREVENTION OF SECONDARY VICTIMISATION   | MULTI-AGENCY COOPERATION  | KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED FOR QUALIFICATION TO PRACTICE THE PROFESSION   | LENGTH OF CURRICULUM  |
|---|---|---------------------------|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Police and other law-enforcement officials</b> | <p>All new recruits are trained against the College of Policing standards contained within the national curriculum (PEQF). Over 20,000 new recruits in recent months will have received this training, which is delivered in the main by universities across the UK. This will be core learning.</p> <p>In <b>Scotland</b>, please see: <a href="https://www.spa.police.uk/spa-media/pyndaphg/item-2-4-police-scotland-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy-and-implementation-plan.pdf">https://www.spa.police.uk/spa-media/pyndaphg/item-2-4-police-scotland-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy-and-implementation-plan.pdf</a></p> | Core initial learning     | Not explicit but the sex-based nature of VAWG is implicit through the VAWG learning | This is a core part of the learning, driven by the statutory Victims' Code of Practice 2021. | Training aims to ensure the purpose of an effective initial response is to prevent revictimisation of current and tertiary victims. | Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and other partnership arrangements are core learning. | There are several entry routes into policing that require a degree/apprenticeship or other qualification. | Variable but continuous over the two year probationary period |

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| <p><b>Prosecutors</b></p>  | <p>New prosecutors in the Magistrates' Court Unit must complete a DA – Advocacy Drills Course. New prosecutors in Rape and Serious Sexual Offence (RASSO) units have mandated training which includes topics such as the impact on memory from trauma and disclosure.</p> <p>In <b>Scotland</b>, please see: <a href="https://www.copfs.gov.uk/the-justice-process/">https://www.copfs.gov.uk/the-justice-process/</a></p> |  |  | <p>New prosecutors in RASSO Units must undertake training about communicating with RASSO victims. The needs and rights of victims are also interwoven in the induction package which all new prosecutors must undertake upon joining the CPS.</p> |  |  |  |  |
| <p><b>Judges</b></p>   | <p>In <b>Scotland</b>, this is a matter for the Judicial Institute for Scotland - <a href="http://judiciary.scot">Judicial Institute (judiciary.scot)</a></p>  |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |
| <p><b>Social workers</b></p>   |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |
| <p><b>Medical doctors</b></p>  |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |
| <p><b>Nurses and midwives</b></p>  |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |
| <p><b>Psychologists, in particular counsellors/ psychotherapists</b></p> |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |



|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| Immigration/<br>asylum officials                  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |  |
| Educational staff<br>and school<br>administrators |  |  |  |  |  |  | <p>All teachers must satisfy the Teachers' Standards throughout their careers. To be awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), trainees must demonstrate that they meet all of the Teachers' Standards at the appropriate level, including Teacher Standard 1, which requires teachers to set goals that stretch and challenge young people of all backgrounds and abilities, and Standard 5, which requires teachers to adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils. Section 2 of the Teachers' Standards is also clear that teachers must treat all pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect; and show tolerance and respect for the rights of others.</p> <p>All early years teachers must satisfy the <a href="#">Early Years Teachers' Standards</a> (EYTS) throughout their careers. To be awarded EYTS, trainees must demonstrate that they meet all of the standards at the appropriate level, including EYTS Standard 1, which requires teachers to set goals that stretch and challenge young people of all backgrounds and abilities, and Standard 5, which requires early years teachers to adapt teaching</p> |  |

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|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <p>to respond to the strengths and needs of all children as well as understanding when they have additional needs. Section 7 also requires an early years teacher to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know and act upon the legal requirements and guidance on health and safety, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child;</li> <li>• Establish and sustain a safe environment and employ practices that promote children's health and safety; and</li> <li>• Know and understand child protection policies and procedures, recognise when a child is in danger or at risk of abuse, and know how to act to protect them.</li> </ul> |  |
|  | <p>In Northern Ireland, the North West Regional College Domestic Violence Awareness Training for 110 staff = 198 hours of training<br/>Belfast Metropolitan College trained 1200</p> |  |  |  |  |  |   |  |
| <b>Journalists and other media professionals</b> |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |  |
| <b>Servicemen and women</b>                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |  |

|                                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Any other relevant category</b> |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

**Table 2: In-service training**

Where this information is available, it appears in the table or, if it sits better there, in the relevant place in the earlier narrative. Where the data appears in neither the table nor the narrative, it is not available.

|   | NUMBER OF PROFESSIONALS TRAINED  | MANDATORY NATURE  | AVERAGE LENGTH OF CURRICULUM   | PERIODICITY  | FUNDING SOURCE                             | BODY MANDATED TO CARRY OUT/CERTIFY IN-SERVICE TRAINING  | TRAINING EFFORTS SUPPORTED BY GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS  |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| <b>Police and other law-enforcement officials</b> | <p>This data is not collated centrally for all subject areas but is held at force level</p> <p>In <b>Scotland</b>, please see: <a href="https://www.spa.police.uk/spa-media/pyndaphg/item-2-4-police-scotland-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy-and-implementation-plan.pdf">https://www.spa.police.uk/spa-media/pyndaphg/item-2-4-police-scotland-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy-and-implementation-plan.pdf</a></p> <p>In <b>Northern Ireland</b>, PSNI have had training on controlling behaviour, understanding the barriers to</p> | <p>There are some 'pathways' into VAWG professions, for example rape and child abuse; that require specialist learning; registers are held for those areas.</p> | <p>In <b>Northern Ireland</b>, the training is a 4 module training package</p> | <p>Chief Constables hold autonomy for local training and continuous professional development requirements for their staff. VAWG is a priority for in force training.</p> | <p>Home Office and College of Policing</p> | <p>Each force has its own training department, however external subject matter experts are often engaged to deliver for VAWG.</p> | <p>Yes, the College of Policing expects training products designed within forces to align with its Authorised Professional Practice and force policy.</p> |

|                    |  |   |                                     |   |  |   |  |
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|                    | reporting and impact of domestic abuse. This has been completed by circa 6500 people and a similar stalking module has been undertaken by 4600 people across the organisation. |   |                                     |   |  |   |  |
| <b>Prosecutors</b> | 4,203 <sup>21</sup><br><br>In <b>Scotland</b> , please see <a href="https://www.cops.gov.uk/the-justice-process/">https://www.cops.gov.uk/the-justice-process/</a>             | Each course has different levels of mandation based on grade and job role <sup>22</sup> | Courses range from ½ day to 3 days. | Each course is available as and when needed; there is no requirement to repeat the course after a certain length of time. <sup>23</sup> | Training is funded from within the CPS. In addition, local CPS areas hold in person and virtual training events which are delivered locally, often with criminal justice system partners including the police. | The training is carried out by trained trainers, mainly from within the central legal training team (CLTT). The quality assurance is carried out by subject matter experts, the CPS thematic leads for the relevant topics and, where appropriate, the Executive Group. |  |
| <b>Judges</b>      | In <b>Scotland</b> , this is a matter for the Judicial Institute for   |   |                                     |   |  |   |  |

<sup>21</sup> The figure of 4,203 is the total figure across all the courses and the likelihood is that many individual prosecutors have attended more than one course.

<sup>22</sup> All new prosecutors to the service who are placed within a Magistrates' Court Unit are required to undertake the Domestic Abuse – Advocacy Drills Course. It is recommended for all new starters. The Domestic Abuse Refresher course is mandatory for all prosecutors who handle domestic abuse cases. In order to carry out RASSO work the induction for Senior Crown Prosecutors, the Disclosure Management Document Course, the impact on memory from trauma and the perverting the course of justice course are mandatory.

<sup>23</sup> Prosecutors are required to ensure they continue to meet their professional standards and will refresh or repeat courses if necessary or enhance their individual learning through other means, such as journals or externally delivered training opportunities.

|   |  |                         |                               |  |  |  |   |
|---|--|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|--|---|
|   | Scotland - <a href="http://judiciary.scot">Judicial Institute (judiciary.scot)</a> |                         |                               |  |  |  |   |
| <b>Social workers</b>   |  |                         |                               |  |  |  |   |
| <b>Medical doctors</b>  |  |                         |                               |  |  |  |   |
| <b>Nurses and midwives</b>  |  |                         |                               |  |  |  |   |
| <b>Psychologists, in particular counsellors/ psychotherapists</b> |  |                         |                               |  |  |  |   |
| <b>Immigration/asylum officials</b>                               |  |                         |                               |  |  |  |   |
| <b>Educational staff and school administrators</b>                | In <b>Scotland</b> , The Mentors in Violence Protection programme mentioned        | In <b>Scotland</b> , no | In <b>Scotland</b> , two days |  |  | In <b>Scotland</b> , Education Scotland. | Beyond their Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT), early years teachers have access to different types of Continuous Professional Development training, some of which is funded by the DfE and some by the local authority. |

|  |   |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|
|  | <p>above trained 368 staff from April 2021 to March 2022 and 580 from April 2022 to March 2023. Other related programmes for 2022-23 trained 85 staff. Additionally local authorities will deliver their own programmes but the Scottish Government does not collect information on numbers.</p> <p><b>Northern Ireland:</b></p> <p>Northern Ireland South West College 569 (22/23 year to date)</p> <p>North West Regional College Domestic Violence Awareness Training for 110 staff = 198 hours of training</p> <p>Belfast Metropolitan College 30</p> | <p>Northern Ireland South West College Mandatory Safeguarding module</p> <p>North West Regional College Mandatory Training in Equality/ Diversity 700+ staff = 700+ training hours</p> <p>Belfast Metropolitan College Voluntary</p> | <p>Northern Ireland South West College Online module which takes approximately 20-30mins to complete</p> <p>North West Regional College Average - 1 hour per session</p> <p>Belfast Metropolitan College Half Day</p> | <p>Northern Ireland South West College Must be completed annually</p> <p>North West Regional College Domestic Violence training offered annually; Mandatory Training in Equality and Diversity is every 3 years for all staff.</p> <p>North West Regional College Domestic Violence training offered annually; Mandatory Training in Equality and Diversity is every 3 years for all staff.</p> | <p>Northern Ireland South West College N/A</p> <p>North West Regional College ONUS Training</p> <p>Belfast Metropolitan College Onus PSNI</p> | <p>Relevant domestic legislation is referenced including Family Homes and Domestic Violence NI Order 1998 and The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups NI Order 2007</p> <p>North West Regional College Domestic Abuse Policy and Equality/Diversity Policy in place. Mandatory training for all staff in Equality/ Diversity. Our Disciplinary and Grievance Policies also cover violence and harassment at work.</p> |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Journalists and other media professionals</b> |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Servicemen and women</b>                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Any other relevant category</b>               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |



**Table 3: Northern Ireland DFC Housing, Urban Regeneration & Local Government (HURLG)  
IV. Protection and support  
(Chapter IV of the Convention, Articles 18 to 28)**

D1.

| <b>Provider</b>  | <b>Council Area</b>      | <b>No. of Accommodation Based Services</b> | <b>Supporting People funded places</b> | <b>No. Finance Support Services</b> | <b>Supporting People Funded places</b> |
|--|--------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid                          | Belfast                  | 2  | 33                                     | 1                                   | 420                                    |
|  | Lisburn & Castlereagh    | 1  | 12                                     |                                     |  |
| Causeway & Mid-Ulster Women's Aid                        | Causeway Coast and Glens | 1  | 10                                     | 1                                   | 58                                     |
|  | Mid Ulster               | 1  | 9                                      | 1                                   | 60                                     |
| Fermanagh Women's Aid                                    | Fermanagh & Omagh        | 1  | 3                                      | 1                                   | 65                                     |
| Foyle Women's Aid  | Derry City & Strabane    | 2  | 24                                     | 1                                   | 100                                    |
| North Down & Ards Women's Aid                            | North Down               | 1  | 7                                      | 1                                   | 60                                     |
| Omagh Women's Aid  | Fermanagh & Omagh        | 1  | 6                                      | 1                                   | 30                                     |
| Womens Aid Antrim Ballymena Carrick Larne & Newtownabbey | Mid and East Antrim      | 2  | 19                                     | 1                                   | 190                                    |
| Women's Aid Armagh Down Ltd                              | Newry                    | 1  | 11                                     | 1                                   | 190                                    |
| Cithrah Foundation                                       | Mid and East Antrim      | 1  | 5                                      | /                                   | /                                      |

**Table 4: Northern Ireland Department of Finance (DOF) and Department of Justice (DOJ)  
VI: Investigation, prosecution and procedural law and protective measures  
(Chapter VI of the Convention, Articles 49 to 58)**

**Numbers of Non-Molestation and Occupation Applications Disposed, 2016-2022**

|      |   | Outcome     |                      |            |                  |          | Total       |
|------|---|-------------|----------------------|------------|------------------|----------|-------------|
|      |   | Granted     | Dismissed or refused | Withdrawn  | Vary / discharge | Other    |             |
| 2016 | Ex-parte non-molestation                      | 1762        | 312                  | 39         | 29               | 3        | 2145        |
|      | Non-molestation                               | 817         | 299                  | 545        | 344              | 1        | 2006        |
|      | Occupation                                    | 11          | 6                    | 26         | 4                | 1        | 48          |
|      | Vary non-molestation order                    | 4           | 5                    | 4          | 3                | 0        | 16          |
|      | Vary occupation order                         | 0           | 2                    | 1          | 0                | 0        | 3           |
|      | Vary / discharge non-molestation / occupation | 0           | 3                    | 6          | 13               | 0        | 22          |
|      | <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>2594</b> | <b>627</b>           | <b>621</b> | <b>393</b>       | <b>5</b> | <b>4240</b> |

|      |   |             |            |            |            |           |             |
|------|---|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| 2017 | Ex-parte non-molestation                      | 1865        | 328        | 55         | 11         | 9         | 2268        |
|      | Non-molestation                               | 686         | 333        | 574        | 461        | 18        | 2072        |
|      | Occupation                                    | 17          | 6          | 29         | 7          | 1         | 60          |
|      | Vary non-molestation order                    | 0           | 3          | 3          | 4          | 0         | 10          |
|      | Vary occupation order                         | 0           | 0          | 0          | 1          | 0         | 1           |
|      | Vary / discharge non-molestation / occupation | 0           | 10         | 9          | 5          | 1         | 25          |
|      | <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>2568</b> | <b>680</b> | <b>670</b> | <b>489</b> | <b>29</b> | <b>4436</b> |

|      |   |             |            |            |            |           |             |
|------|---|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| 2018 | Ex-parte non-molestation                      | 1623        | 272        | 25         | 5          | 7         | 1932        |
|      | Non-molestation                               | 635         | 244        | 509        | 453        | 30        | 1871        |
|      | Occupation                                    | 14          | 12         | 16         | 4          | 1         | 47          |
|      | Vary non-molestation order                    | 1           | 2          | 3          | 5          | 1         | 12          |
|      | Vary occupation order                         | 1           | 0          | 2          | 0          | 0         | 3           |
|      | Vary / discharge non-molestation / occupation | 1           | 3          | 10         | 7          | 0         | 21          |
|      | Other Family Homes & domestic violence        | 0           | 1          | 0          | 0          | 2         | 3           |
|      | <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>2275</b> | <b>534</b> | <b>565</b> | <b>474</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>3889</b> |

|      |   |             |            |            |            |          |             |
|------|---|-------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|-------------|
| 2019 | Ex-parte non-molestation                      | 1404        | 239        | 19         | 11         | 3        | 1676        |
|      | Non-molestation                               | 588         | 234        | 480        | 458        | 5        | 1765        |
|      | Occupation                                    | 12          | 7          | 28         | 3          | 0        | 50          |
|      | Vary non-molestation order                    | 1           | 3          | 1          | 3          | 1        | 9           |
|      | Vary occupation order                         | 0           | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0        | 1           |
|      | Vary / discharge non-molestation / occupation | 1           | 6          | 5          | 2          | 0        | 14          |
|      | Other Family Homes & domestic violence        | 0           | 1          | 1          | 0          | 0        | 2           |
|      | <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>2006</b> | <b>491</b> | <b>534</b> | <b>477</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>3517</b> |

|      |   |             |            |            |            |           |             |
|------|---|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| 2020 | Ex-parte non-molestation                      | 1243        | 495        | 18         | 33         | 2         | 1791        |
|      | Non-molestation                               | 447         | 257        | 471        | 258        | 16        | 1449        |
|      | Occupation                                    | 5           | 5          | 21         | 9          | 0         | 40          |
|      | Vary non-molestation order                    | 2           | 0          | 3          | 3          | 0         | 8           |
|      | Vary occupation order                         | 0           | 0          | 1          | 0          | 0         | 1           |
|      | Vary / discharge non-molestation / occupation | 0           | 6          | 9          | 2          | 0         | 17          |
|      | Other Family Homes & domestic violence        | 0           | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0         | 0           |
|      | <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>1697</b> | <b>763</b> | <b>523</b> | <b>305</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>3306</b> |

|      |   |             |            |            |            |           |             |
|------|---|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| 2021 | Ex-parte non-molestation                      | 1360        | 483        | 22         | 8          | 0         | 1873        |
|      | Non-molestation                               | 676         | 327        | 721        | 449        | 37        | 2210        |
|      | Occupation                                    | 10          | 9          | 15         | 11         | 0         | 45          |
|      | Vary non-molestation order                    | 1           | 2          | 4          | 4          | 0         | 11          |
|      | Vary occupation order                         | 0           | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0         | 0           |
|      | Vary / discharge non-molestation / occupation | 0           | 9          | 8          | 13         | 0         | 30          |
|      | Other Family Homes & domestic violence        | 0           | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0         | 0           |
|      | <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>2047</b> | <b>830</b> | <b>770</b> | <b>485</b> | <b>37</b> | <b>4169</b> |

|                            |   |             |            |            |            |           |             |
|----------------------------|---|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| 2022 (Provisional Figures) | Ex-parte non-molestation                      | 1103        | 508        | 28         | 15         | 1         | 1655        |
|                            | Non-molestation                               | 524         | 239        | 550        | 341        | 11        | 1665        |
|                            | Occupation                                    | 9           | 7          | 20         | 4          | 0         | 40          |
|                            | Vary non-molestation order                    | 3           | 3          | 3          | 4          | 1         | 14          |
|                            | Vary occupation order                         | 0           | 0          | 2          | 0          | 0         | 2           |
|                            | Vary / discharge non-molestation / occupation | 1           | 7          | 5          | 9          | 1         | 23          |
|                            | Other Family Homes & domestic violence        | 0           | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0         | 0           |
|                            | <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>1640</b> | <b>764</b> | <b>608</b> | <b>373</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>3399</b> |

**Table 5: Northern Ireland Department of Finance (DOF) and Department of Justice (DOJ)  
VI: Investigation, prosecution and procedural law and protective measures  
(Chapter VI of the Convention, Articles 49 to 58)**

**Prosecutions and Convictions - including main disposal imposed - for Breach of Non-molestation Order or Breach of Occupancy Order offences, 2012 - 2021**

| Year | Prosecutions | Convictions | Imprisonment | Suspended Custodial | Community sentence | Monetary Penalty | Discharge | Other | Not guilty |
|------|--------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------|-------|------------|
| 2012 | 573          | 390         | 84           | 95                  | 38                 | 105              | 63        | 5     | 183        |
| 2013 | 486          | 328         | 51           | 82                  | 45                 | 81               | 62        | 7     | 158        |
| 2014 | 518          | 357         | 67           | 104                 | 43                 | 73               | 67        | 3     | 161        |
| 2015 | 515          | 353         | 52           | 98                  | 54                 | 64               | 81        | 4     | 162        |
| 2016 | 468          | 324         | 63           | 73                  | 65                 | 63               | 56        | 4     | 144        |
| 2017 | 391          | 261         | 45           | 69                  | 37                 | 61               | 47        | 2     | 130        |
| 2018 | 374          | 258         | 43           | 78                  | 42                 | 57               | 38        | -     | 116        |
| 2019 | 392          | 271         | 52           | 61                  | 46                 | 66               | 46        | -     | 121        |
| 2020 | 256          | 181         | 37           | 50                  | 31                 | 46               | 17        | -     | 75         |
| 2021 | 442          | 284         | 57           | 85                  | 45                 | 57               | 40        | -     | 158        |

Note:

1. Figures relate to initial disposals at court. Appeals are not included.
2. Figures relate to cases where there was a prosecution or conviction for at least one of the offences specified.
3. Figures relate to offences prosecuted under Article 25(a) of the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 or Article 25(b) of the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.
4. Disposals figures relate to main disposals imposed.

**Table 6****Number of VAWG related offences assigned a charge outcome by the police by police force area and crime type, England and Wales, 2020 to 2022 [excludes Devon and Cornwall Police]**

Source: Home Office - Police recorded crime

| Police force area        | Sexual Offences |      |      | Stalking |      |      | Harassment |      |       |
|--------------------------|-----------------|------|------|----------|------|------|------------|------|-------|
|                          | 2020            | 2021 | 2022 | 2020     | 2021 | 2022 | 2020       | 2021 | 2022  |
| Avon & Somerset          | 238             | 268  | 422  | 106      | 119  | 178  | 281        | 183  | 254   |
| Bedfordshire             | 153             | 110  | 151  | 24       | 68   | 76   | 90         | 60   | 72    |
| British Transport Police | 189             | 147  | 234  | 5        | 3    | 5    | 23         | 9    | 18    |
| Cambridgeshire           | 201             | 146  | 171  | 72       | 92   | 110  | 254        | 191  | 183   |
| Cheshire                 | 206             | 312  | 431  | 141      | 312  | 391  | 337        | 350  | 362   |
| Cleveland                | 193             | 160  | 165  | 72       | 87   | 133  | 312        | 201  | 205   |
| Cumbria                  | 122             | 94   | 143  | 51       | 79   | 91   | 195        | 123  | 123   |
| Derbyshire               | 305             | 223  | 297  | 134      | 204  | 219  | 426        | 302  | 262   |
| Dorset                   | 116             | 137  | 138  | 73       | 74   | 82   | 194        | 128  | 126   |
| Durham                   | 188             | 148  | 212  | 132      | 137  | 143  | 279        | 147  | 151   |
| Dyfed-Powys              | 100             | 49   | 74   | 49       | 55   | 87   | 152        | 118  | 126   |
| Essex                    | 429             | 450  | 506  | 168      | 263  | 285  | 590        | 363  | 333   |
| Gloucestershire          | 107             | 94   | 166  | 42       | 79   | 83   | 133        | 117  | 121   |
| Greater Manchester       | 476             | 633  | 921  | 195      | 507  | 706  | 711        | 836  | 1,054 |
| Gwent                    | 131             | 96   | 122  | 96       | 88   | 119  | 273        | 146  | 135   |
| Hampshire                | 314             | 316  | 394  | 125      | 175  | 241  | 387        | 228  | 223   |

|                     |       |       |       |     |     |       |       |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Hertfordshire       | 163   | 181   | 268   | 82  | 110 | 110   | 206   | 122   | 150   |
| Humberside          | 284   | 169   | 222   | 118 | 142 | 138   | 461   | 332   | 247   |
| Kent                | 275   | 373   | 347   | 133 | 213 | 298   | 378   | 344   | 341   |
| Lancashire          | 408   | 384   | 422   | 160 | 211 | 311   | 403   | 379   | 400   |
| Leicestershire      | 213   | 186   | 310   | 95  | 134 | 125   | 198   | 185   | 188   |
| Lincolnshire        | 220   | 132   | 125   | 77  | 60  | 39    | 197   | 137   | 130   |
| London, City of     | 12    | 3     | 12    | 2   | 2   | 6     | 7     | 7     | 3     |
| Merseyside          | 294   | 228   | 391   | 301 | 197 | 174   | 575   | 499   | 532   |
| Metropolitan Police | 1,620 | 1,382 | 2,151 | 545 | 800 | 1,043 | 1,750 | 1,093 | 1,134 |
| Norfolk             | 228   | 221   | 262   | 83  | 134 | 116   | 209   | 196   | 219   |
| North Wales         | 249   | 134   | 195   | 152 | 126 | 156   | 250   | 185   | 207   |
| North Yorkshire     | 341   | 146   | 208   | 99  | 63  | 51    | 385   | 151   | 97    |
| Northamptonshire    | 203   | 140   | 247   | 73  | 97  | 91    | 190   | 144   | 134   |
| Northumbria         | 476   | 378   | 342   | 260 | 250 | 256   | 597   | 449   | 395   |
| Nottinghamshire     | 233   | 320   | 333   | 113 | 129 | 167   | 380   | 293   | 291   |
| South Wales         | 327   | 365   | 411   | 193 | 271 | 263   | 604   | 492   | 374   |
| South Yorkshire     | 288   | 256   | 335   | 325 | 355 | 400   | 562   | 404   | 414   |
| Staffordshire       | 186   | 154   | 254   | 92  | 145 | 196   | 230   | 210   | 257   |
| Suffolk             | 160   | 119   | 187   | 71  | 106 | 105   | 161   | 178   | 110   |
| Surrey              | 210   | 163   | 242   | 83  | 82  | 99    | 184   | 102   | 106   |
| Sussex              | 316   | 296   | 286   | 178 | 177 | 153   | 308   | 217   | 210   |
| Thames Valley       | 446   | 330   | 578   | 114 | 160 | 253   | 445   | 311   | 348   |

|                    |               |               |               |              |              |              |               |               |               |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Warwickshire       | 103           | 96            | 78            | 72           | 96           | 66           | 127           | 81            | 75            |
| West Mercia        | 310           | 270           | 288           | 177          | 147          | 120          | 332           | 219           | 185           |
| West Midlands      | 466           | 327           | 460           | 119          | 156          | 183          | 574           | 413           | 463           |
| West Yorkshire     | 665           | 611           | 839           | 156          | 212          | 296          | 863           | 654           | 661           |
| Wiltshire          | 140           | 126           | 171           | 57           | 58           | 61           | 109           | 113           | 110           |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>12,304</b> | <b>10,873</b> | <b>14,511</b> | <b>5,415</b> | <b>6,975</b> | <b>8,225</b> | <b>15,322</b> | <b>11,412</b> | <b>11,529</b> |

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