



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
David Gauke MP
Lord Chancellor & Secretary
of State for Justice

Robert Neill MP
Chair, Justice Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

15 July 2019

Dear Bob

DOMESTIC ABUSE BILL

I am writing to inform you that the Government will be introducing the Domestic Abuse Bill in the House of Commons tomorrow.

Domestic abuse is a cruel and complex crime that can affect anyone, leaving physical and emotional scars that can last a lifetime. While there has been a welcome gradual fall in the incidence of domestic abuse in recent years, there are still some two million victims a year, the majority of whom are women. Far too many individuals have their lives destroyed by abuse and we need to build a society that has zero tolerance towards domestic abuse and actively empowers victims, communities and professionals to confront and challenge it and to provide victims with the support they deserve.

That is why the Government is committed to transforming the response to this terrible crime, including by introducing this landmark Domestic Abuse Bill. The prevention of abuse and the protection of victims lies at the heart of the Bill and our wider programme of work.

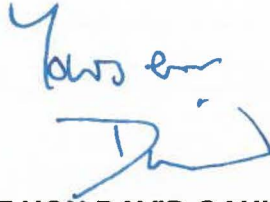
The measures in the Bill seek to:

- **Promote awareness** - to put abuse at the top of everyone's agenda, including by legislating for the first time for a statutory definition of domestic abuse;
- **Protect and support victims** - including by introducing a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Order;
- **Transform the justice response** - including by helping victims to give their best evidence in the criminal courts through the use of video evidence, screens and other special measures, and ensuring that victims of abuse do not suffer further trauma in family court proceedings by being cross-examined by their abuser; and
- **Improve performance** – the new Domestic Abuse Commissioner will help drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse across all local areas and agencies.

The measures in the Bill have benefited from thorough pre-legislative scrutiny by the Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill and the Government has accepted, in whole or

in part, or undertaken to consider further the great majority of the Committee's recommendations; the Government's response to that Committee's report has been published alongside the Bill.

We have also had the benefit of the Home Affairs Committee's report on domestic abuse (Ninth Report of Session 2017-19) and have taken that Committee's recommendations into account when finalising the provisions of the Bill and in taking forward our non-legislative programme of work.



RT HON DAVID GAUKE MP