

Debate Pack

Number CDP 2023 0149

By Sally Lipscombe,

Lulu Meade,

Maria Lalic,

Georgina Sturge

4 July 2023

Criminalisation of victims of violence against women from ethnic minority and migrant communities

1	Violence against Women and Girls	4
1.1	Defining Violence against Women and Girls	4
	Domestic abuse	4
	Impact of violence against women and girls	5
1.2	Government strategies	5
	Tackling VAWG Strategy	6
	Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan	8
	Female Offender Strategy	10
1.3	The criminalisation of victims of violence against women	11
	The Tackling Double Disadvantage project	11
	‘Double standards’: the Centre for Women’s Justice	15
2	Statistics on women, domestic violence and the justice system	16
2.1	Female defendants as victims of domestic violence	16
2.2	Ethnic minority women in the justice system	17
3	Parliamentary material	19

3.1	Debates	19
3.2	Statement	19
3.3	Parliamentary Questions	20
3.4	Select Committee Material	30
4	Media	32
4.1	Press releases	32
4.2	Articles and blogs	33
5	Organisations and further reading	36

Summary

[The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#) defines violence against women as:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

The [Office for National Statistics](#) found that violence against women and girls (VAWG) can have “significant and long lasting” impacts on victims and survivors, which can lead to “mental health issues, suicide attempts and homelessness”.

Several government strategies have been introduced to tackle VAWG and its interaction with female offending, including:

- [The Strategy to tackle VAWG](#)
- [The Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan](#)
- [The Female Offender Strategy](#) and [Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan 2022 to 2025](#)

Stakeholders have called for further government action, particularly in relation to the provision of ‘by and for’ services (specialist services that are led, designed and delivered by and for the users and communities they aim to serve) and support for migrant victims.

Efforts have been made to “improve outcomes and reduce inequalities and discrimination against Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women in contact with the criminal justice system” through the [Tackling Double Disadvantage](#) project, coordinated by a coalition of specialist criminal justice groups. The project has its roots in the Lammy Review, which was commissioned in 2016 when the then Prime Minister David Cameron asked David Lammy MP to lead an independent review of “[the over-representation of defendants from black and ethnic minority backgrounds in the criminal justice system](#)”.

In 2022, the Tackling Double Disadvantage project launched a new [10-point action plan](#) (PDF) aimed at tackling “[persistent inequalities experienced by Black, Asian, minoritised, and migrant women in the criminal justice system](#)”. The plan said the actions built on the findings of the original Double Disadvantage report, as well as the commitments in the Government’s Female Offender Strategy.

A report [published by the Centre for Women’s Justice \(CWJ\) in March 2022](#) explored how victims of VAWG are “unfairly arrested, prosecuted and convicted in relation to offences arising from their experience of abuse”.

The paper, [Double Standard: Ending the unjust criminalisation of victims of violence against women and girls](#), found that the alleged offending of women and girls is “frequently directly linked” to their experience as victims of VAWG. The report explains how such criminalisation particularly affects Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women in a number of ways, including the “double disadvantage” created by intersectional discrimination.

1 Violence against Women and Girls

1.1 Defining Violence against Women and Girls

[The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#) defines violence against women as:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.¹

The Declaration states that violence against women encompasses (but is not limited to):

- Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation (FGM) and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;
- Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;
- Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.²

Domestic abuse

[The statutory definition of domestic abuse](#) is set out in [Part 1 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#). This defines domestic abuse as “abusive behaviour” between “personally connected” people over the age of 16.³

Behaviour is considered abusive if it consists of any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour

¹ [UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women laid out in resolution 48/104](#) (PDF), A/RES/48/104, 23 February 1994, Article 1 [UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women laid out in resolution 48/104](#) (PDF), A/RES/48/104, 23 February 1994, Article 1

² As above, Article 2

³ The definition of “personally connected” is set out in section 2 of the 2021 Act and covers a range of familial and intimate personal relationships

- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse

These are considered abusive behaviours whether “the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct”.

The definitions in Part 1 are underpinned by [statutory guidance](#) that aims to support organisations to identify and respond to domestic abuse. Paragraphs 195 to 198 of the guidance look at particular features of domestic abuse in the context of [race and ethnicity](#) and paragraphs 199 to 209 look at [immigration status and migrant victims](#).

Impact of violence against women and girls

The [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) found that violence against women and girls (VAWG) can have “significant and long lasting” impacts on victims and survivors, which can lead to “mental health issues, suicide attempts and homelessness”. Key findings from the 2021 report are set out below.

Rape or assault by penetration (including attempts) since the age of 16 years

63% of victims in England and Wales reported mental or emotional problems and 10% reported they had tried to kill themselves. In addition, 21% reported taking time off work and 5% reported losing their job or giving up work.

Homelessness

7% of households in England who were homeless or threatened with homelessness recorded domestic abuse as the main reason according to the ‘[Statutory homelessness annual report 2019–20](#)’. The [charity St Mungo’s reported](#) that 35% of women it worked with had slept rough to escape violence.

Safety in the dark in public places

89% of women in Great Britain who had experienced harassment said they felt “very or fairly unsafe” walking on their own in the dark in a park or other open space, according to the [ONS’s 2021 ‘Opinions and lifestyle survey \(OPN\)’](#).

1.2

Government strategies

The Government has published a range of strategies and plans aimed at tackling violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, and female offending. Stakeholders have noted the overlap in these policy areas and the

need to ensure the strategies work together. For example, in evidence to the Public Accounts Committee inquiry on [Improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system](#), the Chief Executive of the [Howard League for Penal Reform](#) Andrea Coomber said:

We know that a large number of women who are in the Female Offender Strategy are equally captured as victims under the violence against women and girls strategy. They are the same women. We need to better understand how these strategies fit together.⁴

Details of the key strategies are set out below.

Tackling VAWG Strategy

The Government published its [Strategy to tackle violence against women and girls](#) in November 2021, [following a public consultation in the form of a 'Call for Evidence'](#). The Strategy set out three ambitions:

1. To increase support for victims and survivors, ensuring they have access to quality support.
2. To increase the number of perpetrators brought to justice, including an increase in the number of crimes reported to the police and increased victim engagement with the police and wider public service response.
3. To reduce the prevalence of violence against women and girls.

The Strategy notes that research has examined the link between victimisation and ethnicity. It refers to studies which found that ethnic minorities may be at heightened risk of child sexual exploitation and of intimate partner sexual violence.⁵

The Strategy also notes that a third of victim and survivor respondents to the Call for Evidence felt that their identity or personal characteristics, such as ethnicity, acted as a barrier to accessing support or other services. It highlighted calls for an improved 'by and for' provision as well as for support to be tailored to specific forms of violence or specific groups of victims and survivors.

⁴ Public Accounts Committee, [Oral evidence: Improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system](#), HC 997, 2 February 2022, Q10

⁵ Franchino-Olsen, H., 2021. Vulnerabilities Relevant for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children/Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: A Systematic Review of Risk Factors. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 22(1), pp. 99-111; Laird, J., Klettke, B., Hall, K., Clancy, E., Hallford, D., 2020. Demographic and Psychosocial Factors Associated with Child Sexual Exploitation: A Systematic Review and Metaanalysis. *JAMA Network Open*, 3(9); Martin, E., Taft, C., Resick, P., 2007. A review of marital rape. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 12(3), pp. 329-347

‘By and for’ services

‘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 Tackling VAWG Strategy said the importance of tailored support had been a clear feature of responses to the Call for Evidence, and that ‘by and for’ services allow for “a comprehensive, cultural understanding of victims’ experiences and ensure accessibility”.

However, the Strategy acknowledged that the ‘by and for’ sector faced difficulties in relation to funding and commissioning. The Strategy set out the following measures to deal with these issues:

- additional Home Office funding of £1.5 million for specialist ‘by and for’ service provision
- increasing the £2 million Specialist Fund (2021-22) launched by the Ministry of Justice and Comic Relief to build the digital capacity of ‘by and for’ services⁶
- issuing [guidance to commissioning authorities](#) to ensure that the commissioning process does not exclude smaller voluntary organisations, including ‘by and for’ services

Despite these measures, stakeholders remain concerned that there is insufficient Government support for ‘by and for’ service provision. There have been calls for the Government to use the Victims and Prisoners Bill to introduce new statutory duties and funding obligations relating to the ‘by and for’ sector. For examples, see:

- the [Patchwork of Provision](#) mapping analysis published by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner Nicole Jacobs in November 2022, in which she called on the Government to create a national funding pot of £263m for ‘by and for’ services over three years
- the [Victims and Prisoners Bill committee stage evidence session](#) with Nicole Jacobs and Dr Hannana Siddiqui, Head of Policy and Research at Southall Black Sisters
- a petition calling for statutory funding to “[protect lifesaving domestic abuse services](#)”, launched by Refuge and a number of other organisations

⁶ See Comic Relief, [Digital-focused £2.3 million fund for specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence organisations](#), 8 July 2022 for details of the grants made under the fund

Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan

In March 2022, the Government published the [Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan](#), which was created using responses to the [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Call for Evidence](#), relevant data, and a literature review. The approach seeks to tackle domestic abuse by prioritising prevention, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators, and building a stronger system.

As part of the Plan, the government promised to invest a minimum of £47.1 million over three years into community-based support services. It reiterated its previous commitments (set out above) of £1.5 million funding for ‘by and for’ services and for revised commissioning arrangements.

The Plan cited research conducted by the Centre for Women’s Justice, which had found that in 77% of cases where women had killed their partner, there was evidence the women had experienced violence or abuse from the deceased.⁷ The Plan therefore set out a commitment for the Home Office to work with the Ministry of Justice and the police to respond effectively to victims and survivors of domestic abuse to prevent the escalation that can end in domestic homicide. It also referred to the Female Offender Strategy (see below), which recognised the “major role” that domestic abuse can play in the lives of female offenders.

Support for migrant victims and survivors of domestic abuse

The Plan also recognised two specific issues faced by migrant victims and survivors of domestic abuse: support for people whose immigration status means they have ‘no recourse to public funds’, and the challenges involved in reporting domestic abuse to the police.

Migrant survivors of domestic abuse with an insecure immigration status have been recognised as particularly vulnerable. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner says this includes people “whose status is temporary or precarious for a number of reasons”:

...the person’s stay is limited; they are awaiting a decision on permanent settlement; they are dependent on their relationship with a settled partner, spouse or family member; they are undocumented or without legal rights to stay.⁸

The government’s statutory guidance on [domestic abuse](#) and [controlling or coercive behaviour](#) both highlight various ways in which perpetrators can a victim’s immigration status against them, for example by:

- withholding documents

⁷ Centre for Women’s Justice, [Women who kill: How the state criminalises women we might otherwise be burying](#) (PDF), p22

⁸ Domestic Abuse Commissioner, [Migrant survivors must not be allowed to fall through the cracks. says Domestic Abuse Commissioner as she calls for urgent overhaul of support](#), 13 December 2022

- preventing the victim from regularising their immigration status
- lying about the victim's immigration status
- purposely letting visas lapse or failing to act on sponsorship duties
- threatening to report the victim to immigration enforcement or to remove them to their country of origin

One particular area of concern is the availability of support services to migrant survivors with 'no recourse to public funds' who are ineligible for the [domestic violence concession](#) under immigration law.⁹ Following [commitments made during the passage of the Domestic Abuse Bill](#), the Government launched a pilot 'Support for Migrant Victims' scheme for victims who do not have access to public funds, with Home Office funding of £1.5 million for 2021-22 and £1.4 million for 2022-23. The scheme is being run by [Southall Black Sisters](#), which provides accommodation and wrap-around support to migrant victims and survivors. In June 2023 Home Office minister Sarah Dines said an independent evaluation of the scheme had assessed it as "successful in meeting the immediate needs of migrant victims of domestic abuse", and that the Government had extended the scheme until March 2025.¹⁰

Another area of concern is that migrant victims and survivors may be reluctant to report abuse to the police due to fear of their details being passed to immigration enforcement. An investigation by police authorities into a [super-complaint submitted by Liberty and Southall Black Sisters](#) about the practice of police sharing victims' information with the Home Office concluded that the practice "was causing significant harm to the public interest".

Stakeholders have called for a complete 'firewall' between police and immigration enforcement to ensure that migrant victims feel safe reporting criminal abuse.¹¹

However, following its own [review into data-sharing arrangements](#) between the police and immigration enforcement, the Home Office rejected calls for a firewall and instead committed to developing a Migrant Victims Protocol. The Home Office says the protocol will assure migrant victims that no immigration enforcement action will be taken against them "while investigation and

⁹ See [Library Briefing Paper 9790 No recourse to public funds](#) for further details. This can be a barrier to accessing certain types of support (for example, places in domestic abuse refuges are often funded by housing benefit, which people with no recourse to public funds are not eligible to receive).

¹⁰ [PQ 189271 \[on Home Office: Grants\]](#), 19 June 2023

¹¹ See for example Step Up Migrant Women, [The Victims and Prisoners Bill – Committee stage](#), 21 June 2023

prosecution proceedings are ongoing, and the victim is receiving support and advice to make an application to regularise their stay”.¹²

The Justice Committee has called on the Government to include a firewall in the Victims and Prisoners Bill.¹³

Female Offender Strategy

The Government launched the [Female Offender Strategy](#) in 2018, which set out a programme of work aimed at improving outcomes for female offenders by tackling the underlying causes of offending. The Strategy said it would seek to make custody a last resort, prioritise early intervention and give women the support they need to address their offending behaviour in community settings.

The Strategy noted that “in many cases vulnerabilities can be a contributing factor in female offending, whether substance misuse issues, experience of abuse, relationship issues, housing issues, employment or financial issues”. It recognised that domestic abuse played a “major part” in female offending, and said that “being a victim of domestic abuse is a predictor of violent reoffending among women”.¹⁴ The Strategy also cited previous Ministry of Justice research indicating that approximately 60% of all female offenders supervised in the community or in custody, who have had an assessment, report having experienced domestic abuse.¹⁵

[The Female Offender Strategy Delivery Plan](#) sets out the government’s commitments for 2022 to 2025 and builds on the [Female Offender Strategy](#). The Delivery Plan highlights 4 key priorities to reduce women’s offending over the 2022 to 2025 period:

1. fewer women entering the justice system and reoffending
2. fewer women serving short custodial sentences with a greater proportion managed successfully in the community
3. better outcomes for women in custody
4. protecting the public through better outcomes for women on release

¹² Home Office, [Home Office and Police data sharing arrangements on migrant victims and witnesses of crime with insecure immigration status](#), December 2021, para 69

¹³ Justice Committee, [Pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Victims Bill](#) (PDF), 30 September 2022, paras 18-22

¹⁴ Ministry of Justice, [Female Offender Strategy](#) (PDF), 2018, p11

¹⁵ As above, p11. See also Ministry of Justice, [Achieving Better Outcomes for Women Offenders](#), 2015 and [Supporting data tables: Female offender strategy](#), 2018

1.3

The criminalisation of victims of violence against women

The Tackling Double Disadvantage project

The 2017 report

The [Tackling Double Disadvantage](#) project, coordinated by a coalition of specialist criminal justice groups, aims to “improve outcomes and reduce inequalities and discrimination against Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women in contact with the criminal justice system”.¹⁶

The project has its roots in the Lammy Review, which was commissioned in 2016 when the then Prime Minister David Cameron asked David Lammy MP to lead an independent review of “the over-representation of defendants from black and ethnic minority backgrounds in the criminal justice system”.¹⁷

As part of its evidence-gathering process, the Lammy Review commissioned the charities [Agenda](#) and [Women in Prison](#) to report on the experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women with experience of the criminal justice system. The charities spoke to 20 women across three focus groups (one in the community, two in women’s prisons) in September and October 2016,¹⁸ before publishing their final report in April 2017.¹⁹

The phrase “double disadvantage” was used by one focus group participant to describe her perspective:

As one woman explained, “in general outside of prison life women are treated lesser than men and I think Black, Asian people are treated lesser than white people so if you are a black or Asian woman... You're already at a disadvantage, a double disadvantage.”²⁰

¹⁶ Agenda, [Our work: Projects and campaigns – Tackling Double Disadvantage](#) [accessed 30 June 2023]

¹⁷ Gov.uk, [Review of racial bias and BAME representation in criminal justice system announced](#), 31 January 2016. For the final report see [The Lammy Review: An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System](#), September 2017

¹⁸ Women in Prison/Agenda, [“Double disadvantage” The experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women in the criminal justice system](#) (PDF), April 2017, p3. The report sets out the makeup of the focus groups: “Group A comprised 4 women approximate age range 40-50plus of Black or Black British ethnicity. Group B comprised 11 women aged between 26 -54 of Black, Asian and Mixed ethnicities. Group C comprised 5 women aged between 28-59 of Black, Asian and White (European) ethnicities.”

¹⁹ Women in Prison/Agenda, [“Double disadvantage” The experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women in the criminal justice system](#) (PDF), April 2017

²⁰ As above, p6

The report noted that women in prison “have often experienced extensive abuse and are likely to have complex mental health, addiction and other needs”.²¹ It cited previous findings of the 2007 Corston Report, a review by Baroness Jean Corston of women with particular vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system:

The Corston Report highlighted the fact that that BAME women were “more likely to be living in a deprived area, more likely to be subject to poverty, have experienced care and been excluded from school. They are also more likely to be remanded in custody than white offenders and their disadvantages continue in the criminal justice system where they are further marginalised. These women face the same barriers in accessing services to help them alter their lives and in resettlement on release from prison as white women but they are further disadvantaged by racial discrimination, stigma, isolation, cultural differences, language barriers and lack of employment skills.”²²

The report set out four key findings from the focus group discussions:

1. The women did not feel their voices and stories had been heard in court proceedings, and that they were confused over process.
2. The women considered that jury assumptions and sentencing decisions could be affected by prejudices and subconscious ethnic or racial bias.
3. The impact of the women’s sentences on their families was extensive and far-reaching.
4. Language and a lack of translators could be a significant barrier throughout a woman’s experience of the criminal justice system if she did not speak English fluently.²³

Agenda and Women in Prison made several recommendations to address these findings, including the following:

- Ensure a clear policy focus on the distinct experiences of BAME women across the criminal justice system, accompanied by better data.
- Make greater use of community-based sentencing and support for women. Full consideration should be given to BAME women’s circumstances (including abusive relationships, mental health issues and caring responsibilities) in sentencing decisions.
- Review the use of remand against BAME women to ensure it is not being overused.

²¹ As above, p4

²² As above, p5. For the Corston Report see the archived Home Office website, [The Corston Report: a review of women with particular vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system](#) [accessed 30 June 2023]

²³ As above, p6

- Consider the influence of coercive relationships on the involvement of women in crime.
- Ensure juries are sufficiently mixed in terms of gender, age and ethnicity.
- Make clear, accessible information (in different languages) available to women when they are remanded into custody and throughout court proceedings. Address language barriers by providing impartial interpreters at crucial points and by making English classes available in prisons to those who need them.
- Deal thoroughly with racism in prisons, including taking complaints and allegations of racism seriously.
- Make greater efforts to recruit prison and probation staff who reflect the gender and ethnicity of those with whom they work.
- Take steps to enable BAME women in prison to maintain family relationships and see their children. The report considered this was “hugely important for BAME women in prison who are particularly likely to be single parents or have familial caring responsibilities”.²⁴
- Provide culturally and religiously sensitive support to meet the emotional and practical needs of BAME women, including preparing for resettlement and understanding the barriers women may face in reintegrating into their communities. The particular needs of foreign national women should be addressed, for example by providing information and advice to help women understand and challenge decisions over their immigration status.

The 2022 action plan

In 2022, a wider coalition of groups launched a new [10-point action plan](#) (PDF) aimed at tackling “persistent inequalities experienced by Black, Asian, minoritised, and migrant women in the criminal justice system”.²⁵ The plan said the actions built on the findings of the original Double Disadvantage report, as well as the commitments in the Government’s Female Offender Strategy.

The actions were as follows:

1. Train criminal justice staff on culture, ethnicity, race, faith, gender and anti-racism to meet the multiple and intersecting needs of Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women.

²⁴ As above, p20

²⁵ Agenda Alliance, [Government must tackle ‘persistent racism and gender inequality’ in CJS](#), 31 January 2022. The groups involved are Agenda, [Hibiscus](#), [Muslim Women in Prison](#), [the Zahid Mubarek Trust](#), the [Criminal Justice Alliance](#) and [Women in Prison](#).

2. Develop practical resources for Home Office and Ministry of Justice staff on the rights of Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women in relation to language barriers/support needs.
3. Recruit Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women with lived experience of the criminal justice system to become peer mentors and cultural mediators.
4. Require the Ministry of Justice to publish its statistical report [Women and the Justice System](#) on an annual basis, including greater depth analysis of racial disparities in women's experiences.
5. Ensure the use of diversion and out of court disposals for Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women, and end the use of disproportionate custodial sentencing and remands.
6. Identify gaps in services for Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women who have an insecure immigration status.
7. Improve the effectiveness of current external scrutiny bodies to identify and challenge discrimination.
8. Ensure the circumstances of Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women are properly taken into consideration by providing effective legal representation in court.
9. Ensure funding and commissioning arrangements are accessible to organisations to deliver specialist support for this group in all parts of the criminal justice system.
10. Address issues identified in the [Farmer Review](#)²⁶ around strengthening family, children, and community relationships in prison for Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women.

An online 'one year on' roundtable was held in March 2023 to discuss progress, which was summarised as follows:

While challenges such as staffing capacity and a lack of disaggregated data came into play, there has been some progress: mandatory training on issues such as unconscious bias, research on racial disproportionality, partnerships with community organisations and upcoming plans to update guidance and strategies. Throughout the discussion, the necessity of the work was regularly

²⁶ The Farmer Review, conducted by Lord Michael Farmer in partnership with the charity [Clinks](#), was published in 2017 and identified family relationships as "the golden thread" to help reduce reoffending: see Ministry of Justice, [Importance of strengthening prisoners' family ties to prevent reoffending and reduce intergenerational crime](#), 2017. A follow-up review looking specifically at women offenders was published in 2019: see Ministry of Justice, [Importance of strengthening female offenders' family and other relationships to prevent reoffending and reduce intergenerational crime](#), 2019.

emphasised as well as a commitment to implement change and centre the voices of women with lived experience.²⁷

‘Double standards’: the Centre for Women’s Justice

A report [published by the Centre for Women’s Justice \(CWJ\) in March 2022](#) explored how victims of VAWG are “unfairly arrested, prosecuted and convicted in relation to offences arising from their experience of abuse”. Examples of such cases can occur when victims:

- use force against their abuser in self-defence, which can lead to charges for assault offences
- are coerced by their abuser into committing offences such as benefit or mortgage fraud, or hiding weapons or drugs
- offend “under duress of circumstance”, for example by shoplifting to supplement an income restricted by their abuser

The CWJ also raised concern regarding the role the criminal justice system may have in enabling forms of abuse through the handling of counter-allegations:

Allegations against victims are sometimes deliberately used as a tactic by perpetrators to extend their control. In this way, the criminal justice system can be led to collude in the abuse.²⁸

The report says that the impact of criminalisation on Black, Asian, minoritised and migrant women is particularly exacerbated by:

- The “double disadvantage” created by intersectional discrimination
- Coerced offending
- Barriers to proper consideration of contextual abuse
- Failures to recognise abuse and discriminatory attitudes
- Poor quality interpreting and need for criminal justice staff training

The CWJ is calling on the government to use the Victims and Prisoners Bill to introduce new statutory defences for victims of VAWG and domestic abuse, and to add a requirement to the Victims’ Code to protect against victims’ unjust criminalisation.²⁹

²⁷ Agenda, [Double disadvantage: one year on roundtable](#), 10 March 2023

²⁸ Centre for Women’s Justice, [Double Standard: Ending the unjust criminalisation of victims of violence against women and girls Executive Summary](#), p3

²⁹ Centre for Women’s Justice, [Stop Criminalising Survivors](#) [accessed 4 July 2023]

2 Statistics on women, domestic violence and the justice system

2.1 Female defendants as victims of domestic violence

The data which is collected on defendants in the criminal justice system in England and Wales does not routinely include a record of whether individuals have been the victim of domestic violence or abuse.

The Ministry of Justice's 2018 Female Offender Strategy claimed that "60% of female offenders supervised in the community or in custody, who have an assessment, have experienced domestic abuse."³⁰ However, the data cited in relation to this claim appears to come from offenders using national Liaison and Diversion services in 2016/17, and the underlying figures themselves suggest that the proportion of female users of this service who had been the victim of abuse was closer to 25%.³¹

A study by The Disabilities Trust provides some relevant data. Between 2016 and 2018, women at HMP/YOI Drake Hall were screened for evidence of brain injuries and were also asked about their experience of domestic abuse victimisation.³² They report that

- 96% of the female offenders they screened reported they had experienced domestic abuse victimisation.
- 64% reported they had sustained a traumatic brain injury and 62% reported that it had been the result of domestic violence.
- This works out at around 40% of the screened female offenders having sustained a traumatic brain injury as the result of domestic violence.

Given that this screening was only carried out at one prison and may have been designed to mainly collect data on those who had experienced brain injury, we cannot be sure whether these proportions are representative of the wider population.

In 2012, the Ministry of Justice carried out research on prisoners' backgrounds, using data on a sample of prisoners from 2006/07. They found that,

³⁰ MoJ (2018) [Female Offender Strategy](#), p.11-12

³¹ MoJ (2018) [Female Offender Strategy](#), supporting table 1.2i. Note: This is the proportion excluding 'not known'.

³² The Disabilities Trust (no date) [Making the Link: Female Offending and Brain Injury](#)

“Twenty-nine per cent of [the sample] stated that they had experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse as a child. Women (53%) were more likely to report having experienced some sort of abuse than men (27%), as were prisoners from a non-BAME background (31%), compared with prisoners from a BAME background (20%).”³³

On the subject of mental health, they found that

- Female prisoners were more than twice as likely as male prisoners to be identified as suffering from anxiety and depression (49% compared with 23%). The equivalent rate in the general population was around 19% for women and 12% for men.³⁴
- A third of SPCR female prisoners (33%) reported having suicidal thoughts in the four weeks before custody compared with 14% of male prisoners.
- Female prisoners were also more likely than male prisoners to report ever having self-harmed (29% compared with 13%). This was higher than the general population, where less than 5% stated that they had ever engaged in self-harm.

These results are also not necessarily representative of the female prison population as a whole.

2.2

Ethnic minority women in the justice system

There is some published justice data which includes a breakdown by sex and ethnicity but it is patchy and limited in terms of what it can tell us about the experience of people from different ethnic backgrounds.

Between 2013 and 2022, women from ethnic minorities made up around 13% of female defendants at Crown court trials and around 2% of defendants of both sexes.³⁵

The figures for this ten-year period show that

- The conviction ratio was highest for White defendants, of both sexes, although this may have to do with differences in the rates of guilty pleading.
- Women from ethnic minorities were slightly more likely to be sentenced to immediate custody than those from White backgrounds

³³ MoJ (2014) [‘Prisoners’ childhood and family backgrounds’](#), from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners

³⁴ MoJ (2014) [Gender differences in substance misuse and mental health amongst prisoners](#), from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners

³⁵ MoJ, [Criminal justice statistics quarterly, December 2022](#): ‘Outcomes by offence tool’. Refers to defendants in indictable and triable-either-way cases.

(for example, 17% of Black female offenders sentenced at the Crown court were sentenced to custody, compared with 15% of White women). This does not control for type of offence.

- The average custodial sentence length for women sentenced at the Crown court was shortest for White offenders (11 months) and longest for Black and Asian offenders (18 and 15 months, respectively). This may also relate to different rates of guilty pleading.

Prison population statistics show that, as of 31 March 2023, there were 566 female prisoners from ethnic minority backgrounds in England and Wales. They made up 17% of the total female prison population of 3,293 individuals.³⁶

The Lammy Review, which was published in 2017 and which mainly drew on data from 2014/15, found evidence of differences in outcomes for Black, Asian and ethnic minority (BAME) women and White women at various points in the justice system.³⁷ For example, analysis of 2014/15 data from England and Wales found that,

- Once arrested, Black women were less likely than White women to face prosecution. Of those arrested, 88 Black women were charged by the CPS for every 100 White women.
- Once charged with an offence, Black women were more likely to be tried at the Crown Court. Of those charged, 163 Black women were tried at the Crown Court for every 100 White women.
- Black, Asian, Mixed ethnic and Chinese/Other ethnic women were all more likely than White women to enter not guilty pleas at Crown Court, with Asian women more than one and a half times more likely to do so.
- Among those tried at Magistrates' Court, 100 White women were found guilty compared with 122 Black women, 142 Asian women, and 124 women in the BAME category overall.
- No significant difference was found between defendants from different ethnic backgrounds when it came to the likelihood of being convicted in a jury trial.

It should be noted that the evidence base on this subject is still relatively thin and the results of any individual study should not necessarily be used to draw general conclusions about the experience of different groups in the justice system as a whole.

³⁶ MoJ, [Offender Management Statistics quarterly: October to December 2022](#), table 1.4

³⁷ [The Lammy Review: Final report](#)

3 Parliamentary material

3.1 Debates

[UK: Violence Against Women and Girls](#) - HL Deb 29 Jun 2023 - 831 cc208-141

[Violence Against Women and Girls: Sentencing](#) - HC Deb 01 Feb 2023 - 727 cc119-141WH

[Violence against Women and Girls: Plymouth](#) - HC Deb 25 Jan 2023 - 726 cc339-356WH

[Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review](#) - HC Deb 30 Nov 2022 - 723 cc388-391WH

[Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence](#) - HL Deb 27 Jun 2022 - 823 cc113-134GC

[Support for Black Victims of Domestic Abuse](#) - HC Deb 28 Mar 2022 - 711 cc204-226WH

[Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls](#) - HC Deb 02 Mar 2022 - 709 cc1051-1097

3.2 Statement

[Domestic Homicide Sentencing Review - Publication and Interim Response](#)
17 Mar 2023 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS643

[Tackling violence against women and girls](#)
20 Feb 2023 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS564

[Ratification of the Istanbul Convention](#)
17 May 2022 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS34

[Istanbul Convention Ratification: 2021 Report on Progress](#)
01 Nov 2021 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS364

3.3

Parliamentary Questions

[Domestic Abuse](#)

Asked by: Baroness Helic

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of disparities in the response to, and treatment of, domestic abuse and domestic violence on the basis of race or ethnicity.

Answering member: Lord Sharpe of Epsom | **Department:** Home Office

This Government recognises that Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), including domestic abuse, affects a wide range of people. Some victims, especially those with specific needs and vulnerabilities, including ethnic minority victims, may experience additional barriers to identifying, disclosing, seeking help or reporting abuse.

That is why in tackling domestic abuse a “one size fits all” approach is not appropriate to support all victims. We also understand the importance of specialist and ‘by and for’ services in providing tailored support and understanding that ethnic minority victims and survivors of VAWG offences and domestic abuse need. These are services that are led, designed and delivered ‘by and for’ the users and communities they aim to serve. As a result, these organisations have the necessary skills and experience to provide appropriate support.

On 22 November 2022, we commenced an open commercial competition (VAWG Specialist and Support Services Fund) for ‘by and for’ and specialist services. This will enable vital services, who are based in the communities they serve, to support victims often facing the greatest barriers to getting the help they need. We are able to fund this competition with up to £8.4 million (in total) to run over financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25, with up to £6 million ring-fenced grant funding for ‘by and for’ services over the two years.

Whilst there is current international research on how colorimetry can assist the assessment of bruising in adults and children with darker skin this has yet to impact on NICE Guidance on bruising as of March 2021, or contemporary Royal College of Emergency Medicine Guidance.

04 Apr 2023 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL6676

Date tabled: 21 Mar 2023 | **Date for answer:** 04 Apr 2023 | **Date answered:** 04 Apr 2023

[Domestic Abuse: Defence for Victims who Commit an Offence](#)

Asked by: Lord Bird (CB)

As we have a bit of time, I should like to tell your Lordships something quite horrible: I almost killed my father for almost killing my mother. The Minister said that life is precious and we should look after it, but what my father had done to my mother over many years was to destroy her humanity. If we could somehow have awarded my father an early death, it would have done us all a great favour.

Oral questions - Supplementary

Answering member: Lord Bellamy (Con)

My Lords, I am conscious of the emotion and the difficulties and severe situations that many have experienced with this issue. The underlying question here, which I do not think we can really discuss in detail today, is whether some enhanced form of self-defence is an absolute defence to a homicide case, or whether the available partial defences of manslaughter, voluntary manslaughter, diminished responsibility, loss of control et cetera are sufficient—and where the balance should be. That is a very difficult question.

21 Feb 2023 | Oral answers to questions | House of Lords | 827 c1541

Date answered: 21 Feb 2023

[Mental Health: Domestic Abuse](#)

Asked by: Clark, Feryal

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to understand the impact of domestic abuse on the mental health of Black and minority women.

Answering member: Maria Caulfield | **Department:** Department of Health and Social Care

The Department and NHS England regularly engage with organisations supporting the victims of domestic abuse, including those representing black and minority women. Integrated care boards (ICBs) are required to set out how the needs of victims of abuse will be addressed in joint forward plans. NHS England is currently producing guidance to assist ICBs to develop these plans. The Government launched a 12-week public call for evidence on long term measures to support mental health, wellbeing and suicide prevention, which closed on 7 July 2022. We are currently considering over 5,000 submissions received from stakeholders.

13 Dec 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 103057

Date tabled: 05 Dec 2022 | **Date for answer:** 07 Dec 2022 | **Date answered:** 13 Dec 2022

[Migrants: Gender Based Violence](#)

Asked by: Jones, Gerald

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, with reference to the Written Ministerial Statement of 17 May 2022 on Ratification of the Istanbul Convention, HCWS34, and the decision to apply a reservation to Article 59 of that Convention, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the adequacy of safeguards for protecting migrant women in Wales from gender-based violence.

Answering member: Sir Robert Buckland | **Department:** Wales Office

On 21 July, the UK Government ratified the Istanbul Convention, sending a strong message across the UK, and around the world, that this Government is committed to tackling violence against women and girls.

As outlined in the Written Ministerial Statement of 17 May 2022, we decided to apply a reservation to Article 59, which relates to residence permits for migrant victims of domestic abuse, to enable us to ratify, pending the evaluation findings of the Support for Migrant Victims (SMV) scheme pilot. We will carefully consider the findings of the SMV pilot to inform any future policy decisions as soon as is practicable.

We are committed to supporting all victims of domestic abuse, regardless of immigration status. £1.4 million of funding has been

allocated in 2022-23 to continue to fund support for migrant victims of domestic abuse.

08 Sep 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 45328

Date tabled: 02 Sep 2022 | **Date for answer:** 06 Sep 2022 | **Date answered:** 08 Sep 2022

Prisons: North East

Asked by: Morris, Grahame

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether prisons in the North East have been used as a place of safety for women fleeing domestic abuse.

Answering member: Tom Pursglove | **Department:** Ministry of Justice

The Bail Act 1976 creates a general presumption in favour of bail. The court can, however, refuse bail for a variety of reasons, including where it is satisfied that refusing bail is necessary for the defendant's own protection (adults) or own welfare (youth).

The court's decision to remand an individual in custody for their own protection is used as a last resort and out of concern for the defendant, where circumstances are such that a defendant would come to harm if released into the community and there is no other suitable option available to the courts.

The Department does not centrally hold data on the reasons for remand into custody although we understand, anecdotally, that the power to remand for own protection is used sparingly.

The Government is committed to tackling domestic abuse. This commitment is demonstrated by our landmark Domestic Abuse Act last year, and more recently the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan. The Act has established a wide-ranging statutory definition of domestic abuse that incorporates a range of abusive behaviours beyond physical violence, brings in important new protections and support for victims in court and creates new offences such as non-fatal strangulation. Building on the Act, the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan seeks to transform the whole of society's response in order to prevent offending, support victims and pursue perpetrators, as well as to strengthen the systems and processes in place to deliver these goals.

19 Jul 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 35918

Date tabled: 13 Jul 2022 | **Date for answer:** 18 Jul 2022 | **Date answered:** 19 Jul 2022

[Migrant Workers: Domestic Abuse](#)

Asked by: Thompson, Owen

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will take steps to ensure that migrant women who are victims of domestic abuse can be granted residence in the UK which is not dependent on the spouse or partner who is the perpetrator of that abuse.

Answering member: Rachel Maclean | **Department:** Home Office

Tackling domestic abuse is a key priority for this Government and we are committed to supporting all victims of domestic abuse. Anyone who has suffered domestic abuse must be treated as a victim first and foremost, regardless of immigration status.

On 30 March, we published the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan which will seek to transform the whole of society's response to prevent offending, support victims and pursue perpetrators, as well as to strengthen the systems in place to deliver these goals.

Support is provided to migrant victims of domestic abuse through our Destitute Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC) which enables those victims, who entered the UK on certain partner or spousal visas, three months access to public funds, which can be used to fund safe accommodation.

Migrant victims can also apply for settlement through the Domestic Violence Indefinite Leave to Remain Rules (DVILR). The intention is to safeguard eligible victims by offering them leave independent of the abusive partner.

Following the Government's review of support for migrant victims in 2020, last year we launched the Support for Migrant Victims Scheme to provide a support net for victims who are not eligible to apply under the DDVC.

The 12-month pilot, run by Southall Black Sisters and their delivery partners, and supported with £1.5 million of Government funding, has

provided wraparound support services for migrant victims of domestic abuse with no recourse to public funds. Support includes: accommodation, subsistence, and counselling.

The pilot and independent evaluation aims to ensure that we have a robust evidence base to inform future policy decisions. The evaluation will be producing a final report in Summer 2022.

In the interim, we will provide £1.4 million in 2022-23 to continue to fund support for migrant victims of domestic abuse, whilst we take on board vital lessons learned from the pilot to inform future policy decisions.

15 Jun 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 15312

Date tabled: 09 Jun 2022 | **Date for answer:** 13 Jun 2022 | **Date answered:** 15 Jun 2022

[Police: Training](#)

Asked by: Hanna, Claire

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to help ensure that specialist mandatory training for all police and other relevant government agencies is in place to support black women and girls affected by domestic abuse.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Department:** Home Office

This Government is committed to ensuring that all victims of violence against women and girls get the support they need. The Valerie's Law petition calls for police and agency training to help them better understand the lived experiences, needs and barriers of black women affected by domestic abuse. We know that domestic abuse affects a disparate group and that a "one size fits all" approach is not appropriate, especially for ethnic minority victims. Training is an important part of tackling and responding to domestic abuse, but this needs to form part of a wider approach of guidance and support.

We recognise the aims of the Valerie's Law petition and agree it is essential that police receive the right training to respond effectively, regardless of the victim's background. The College of Policing's foundation includes police ethics and self-understanding, hate crimes, ethics and equalities, and policing without bias. Specialist training for

officers dealing routinely with public protection issues explores these issues in more depth and detail.

The College of Policing has also developed specialist training, the ‘Domestic Abuse Matters’ programme, which helps first responders dealing with an incident or report. This considers the needs of different victims, including those from a diverse black community and ethnic minority communities. This training is being delivered to the majority of forces already, and the Home Office will provide up to £3.3 million over three years to support further delivery.

The new full-time National Policing Lead for Violence Against Women and Girls, DCC Maggie Blyth, has included building trust and confidence as a key pillar for delivery: this includes working with charities supporting ethnic minority women and girls to avoid their specific needs being overlooked.

Finally, the Government committed during the Parliamentary debate to meeting with the College of Policing and with representative community organisations to ensure that police training continues to address these issues fully and effectively.

27 Apr 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 154479

Date tabled: 14 Apr 2022 | **Date for answer:** 20 Apr 2022 | **Date answered:** 27 Apr 2022

[Criminal Proceedings: Women](#)

Asked by: Brown, Ms Lyn

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the report by Hibiscus Initiatives and others, Tackling Double Disadvantage, published on 22 January 2022, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of the collection of disaggregated data on gender-based violence and its links with (a) Black, (b) Asian, (c) other ethnic minority and (d) migrant women’s pathways into the criminal justice system.

Answering member: Kit Malthouse | **Department:** Home Office

The recommendations included in the “Tackling Double Disadvantage” report are being considered by the Female Offender Minority Ethnic working group established by the Ministry of Justice.

Collecting data allows us to monitor the prevalence of violence against women and girls amongst different groups and further integrate a diverse range of victim experiences into conversations and policy decisions. The Home Office is committed to establishing a data collection on offences where the crime has been motivated by a hostility to the victim's sex, with discussions with police forces ongoing. A voluntary collection on the ethnicity of victims of all crime began on 1st April this year. Together, these collections will allow us to assess gender-based violence by ethnicity.

The Home Office does not collect information on whether a victim or perpetrator of crime was a migrant or not.

In July 2021, we published our cross-Government Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy and on 30th March published the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan. For the first time, our Strategy and Plan were shaped by the public's views – we ran a national Call for Evidence on Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls which received an unprecedented 180,000 responses. We actively sought input from underrepresented groups and held focus groups to ensure that we heard the perspectives of people from ethnic minority backgrounds and refugee and migrant women expert service providers. In the Tackling VAWG Strategy, we committed to working with the Office for National Statistics to review current available data on violence against women and girls and identify the priorities for data improvement.

The report states its aim to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities for ethnic minority and migrant women in contact with the criminal justice system. We agree it is vital that police officers and criminal justice staff have the right competences and values, and an understanding, especially when dealing with the most vulnerable in our society. The College of Policing's foundation training for all those entering the service includes substantial coverage of police ethics and self-understanding, including the effects of personal conscious and unconscious bias. The initial training undertaken by all officers also covers hate crimes, ethics and equalities, and policing without bias. In addition, the College of Policing have developed specialist domestic abuse training, the Domestic Abuse Matters programme, which has been, or is in the process of being delivered for, the majority of forces (32 Home Office forces have either completed the training, are currently in process of, or are mobilising). The first responders training makes covers dealing with the specific vulnerabilities of different victims.

The new full-time National Policing Lead for Violence Against Women and Girls, DCC Maggie Blyth, has included building trust and

confidence as a key pillar of the Policing VAWG National Framework for delivery. This includes working with charities supporting ethnic minority and migrant women and girls to avoid their specific needs being overlooked.

25 Apr 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 150129

Date tabled: 30 Mar 2022 | **Date for answer:** 19 Apr 2022 | **Date of holding answer:** 25 Apr 2022 | **Date answered:** 25 Apr 2022

[Prisoners: Women](#)

Asked by: Reeves, Ellie

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to tackle the disproportionality of women of ethnic minorities in prisons.

Answering member: Lucy Frazer | **Department:** Ministry of Justice

We want people to have confidence in a justice system that is fair and open – one where no person suffers discrimination of any sort.

The over-representation of ethnic minority women in prisons, and in the justice system more widely, is a real concern and we continue to prioritise understanding and tackling disparities they may face.

The Female Offender Strategy (FOS), a comprehensive programme of work to improve outcomes for women at all points of the CJS, included a clear commitment to look at how the distinct needs of ethnic minority women can be better addressed, and work is underway to deliver this commitment.

We have established a specific Female Offender Minority Ethnic (FOME) Working Group to better understand the issues faced by ethnic minority women in the CJS. This brings together policy and operational leads with expert voluntary sector colleagues with experience of supporting this cohort of women.

Work includes developing specific staff training centred on the needs of ethnic minority women, user-centred research focusing on the earlier experiences ethnic minority women face in understanding the legal processes they face up to the pre-sentencing stage, supporting those voluntary sector organisations who work with this cohort, and taking forward the recommendations of Lord Farmer's Review.

More generally, the Department has published two updates to our work on tackling racial disparities detailing the full range of activities to address race disparity in the CJS including specific sections focused on work relevant to the disparity faced by ethnic minority women.

14 Sep 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 43632

Date tabled: 06 Sep 2021 | **Date for answer:** 08 Sep 2021 | **Date answered:** 14 Sep 2021

[Migrants: Detainees](#)

Asked by: Campbell, Sir Alan

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to reduce the use of immigration detention for women who have survived torture, rape or trafficking.

Answering member: Chris Philp | **Department:** Home Office

The government remains committed to using detention only where necessary. Indeed, the vast majority (95%) of people liable to be removed from the UK are granted immigration bail and there continues to be a general downward trend in the use of detention since 2015.

The Home Office will always seek to facilitate voluntary return as an alternative to detention and enforced removal. Where the use of detention is considered necessary, we recognise that some people may be particularly vulnerable to harm. This is the basis of the Adults at Risk in Immigration Detention (AAR) policy, which strengthens the presumption against detention for vulnerable adults. The AAR policy enables officials to identify vulnerable individuals and consequently make balanced decisions about the appropriateness of their detention. Under the policy, women who have survived torture, rape or trafficking will be detained only when the evidence of vulnerability in their particular case is outweighed by the immigration considerations, including immigration compliance, criminality factors and expected date of removal.

Additional safeguards are also in place for those in detention displaying such vulnerabilities, including regular reviews of detention and reporting mechanisms to ensure that particularly vulnerable individuals are brought to the attention of those with direct

responsibility for authorising, maintaining and reviewing detention. The recently amended decision-making process for potential victims of modern slavery also includes a Modern Slavery Needs Assessment to identify victims' recovery needs and establish whether they can be met in detention.

All Home Office staff working in the detention system are also given training and support to identify and act upon indicators of vulnerability at the earliest opportunity.

21 Jun 2021 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 16015

Date tabled: 15 Jun 2021 | **Date for answer:** 17 Jun 2021 | **Date answered:** 21 Jun 2021

3.4

Select Committee Material

[Women in prison: Government response to the Committee's first report. Justice Committee fourth special report.](#)

19 Oct 2022 | Parliamentary committees - House of Commons papers - Select Committee reports (Government responses) | House of Commons | HC 802 2022-23

Corporate author: Ministry of Justice · Justice Committee

[Women in prison. Justice Committee first report.](#)

19 Jul 2022 | Parliamentary committees - Select Committee reports - House of Commons papers | House of Commons | HC 265 2022-23

Corporate author: Justice Committee

[Improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system. Committee of Public Accounts fifty-first report.](#)

20 Apr 2022 | Parliamentary committees - Select Committee reports - House of Commons papers | House of Commons | HC 997 2021-22

Corporate author: Committee of Public Accounts

4 Media

4.1 Press releases

[Cost of living crisis continues to bite as it prevents women from escaping abuse](#)

Women's Aid

18 June 2023

[Support not Deport! The U.K. government is feeding into the hands of traffickers: a call to stop the criminalisation of potential victims of trafficking](#)

Hibiscus Initiative

13 June 2023

[First national threat assessment of VAWG](#)

National Police Chiefs' Council

18 May 2023

[Migrant survivors must not be allowed to fall through the cracks, says Domestic Abuse Commissioner as she calls for urgent overhaul of support](#)

Domestic Abuse Commissioner

13 December 2022

[Government failing to meet commitments to victims, says Parliament's Justice Committee](#)

End Violence Against Women and Girls Coalition

30 September 2022

[DCC Maggie Blyth reflects on the police's fight to tackle violence against women and girls one year on from taking national role](#)

National Police Chiefs' Council

08 September 2022

[CJA & IMB report shows discrimination for Black, Asian and minority ethnic women in prison](#)

Criminal Justice Alliance

08 April 2022

[Tackling Double Disadvantage](#)

Women in Prisons

January 2022

[Migrant victims forced to stay with abusers or face destitution because they can't access public funds](#)

Domestic Abuse Commissioner

20 October 2021

4.2

Articles and blogs

[The Observer view on domestic abuse: thousands of women in England and Wales are being refused refuge](#)

The Observer

16 April 2023

[Domestic abuse will continue to spread without adequate resources to fight it](#)

Times

23 March 2023

[Women Who Offend as A Result of Coercive Control](#)

Russell Webster

03 March 2023

[“Has she got status?”: Gender based violence and the needs of migrant women](#)

Welsh Parliament, Senedd Research

12 December 2022

[New research shows police failing to act on domestic abuse reports – ethnic minority victims worst affected](#)

Victims Support

01 December 2022

[£24m to tackle root causes of female offending](#)

Police Professional

01 September 2022

[End The Unjust Criminalization of Female Victims Of Violence](#)

Russell Webster

31 March 2022

[Joint response to the “Home Office and Police data-sharing arrangements on migrant victims and witnesses of crime with insecure immigration status”](#)

Liberty

February 2022

[Calls to end disproportionate sentencing of BAME women facing ‘double disadvantage’ of gender inequality and racism](#)

The Justice Gap

01 February 2022

[‘Double disadvantage’ of race and gender facing BAME and migrant women in prison must be tackled, experts urge](#)

iNews

31 January 2022

[The struggle continues: SBS responds to the Government’s rejection of our amendments to protect migrant women](#)

Southall Black Sisters

16 April 2021

[Domestic Abuse in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups](#)

Interventions Alliance

23 March 2021

[The Domestic Abuse Bill and its Lack of Support for Migrant Women](#)

Electronic Immigration Network

22 March 2021

5

Organisations and further reading

[Race, Migration, Criminalisation and Mental Health: The gendered experiences of Black, minoritised and migrant women in contact with the criminal justice system supported by Hibiscus Initiatives](#), Hibiscus Initiative, June 2023

Josie Austin, [Nowhere to Turn 2023: Findings from the seventh year of the No Woman Turned Away project](#), Women's Aid, June 2023

Rani Selvarajah, [Violence Against Women and Girls: Snapshot Report 2022-2023](#), End Violence Against Women Coalition, 15 February 2023

Claudia Vince and Emily Evison, [Invisible Women: Hope, health, and staff-prisoner relationships](#), Prison Reform Trust, February 2023

Katy Swaine-Williams, [Double Standard: Ending the unjust criminalisation of victims of violence against women and girls](#), Centre for Women's Justice, March 2022

Emma Sheeran, [Identifying Women's Pathways to Offending and the Primary Prevention and Early Intervention Opportunities for Women at Risk of Offending in Wales](#), ACE Hub Wales, 2022

[Safety Before Status: Improving Pathways to Support for Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse](#), Domestic Abuse Commissioner, October 2021

Disclaimer

The Commons Library does not intend the information in our research publications and briefings to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. We have published it to support the work of MPs. You should not rely upon it as legal or professional advice, or as a substitute for it. We do not accept any liability whatsoever for any errors, omissions or misstatements contained herein. You should consult a suitably qualified professional if you require specific advice or information. Read our briefing '[Legal help: where to go and how to pay](#)' for further information about sources of legal advice and help. This information is provided subject to the conditions of the Open Parliament Licence.

Feedback

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Please note that authors are not always able to engage in discussions with members of the public who express opinions about the content of our research, although we will carefully consider and correct any factual errors.

You can read our feedback and complaints policy and our editorial policy at commonslibrary.parliament.uk. If you have general questions about the work of the House of Commons email hcenquiries@parliament.uk.

The House of Commons Library is a research and information service based in the UK Parliament. Our impartial analysis, statistical research and resources help MPs and their staff scrutinise legislation, develop policy, and support constituents.

Our published material is available to everyone on commonslibrary.parliament.uk.

Get our latest research delivered straight to your inbox. Subscribe at commonslibrary.parliament.uk/subscribe or scan the code below:



 commonslibrary.parliament.uk

 [@commonslibrary](https://twitter.com/commonslibrary)