



## Domestic Abuse and the Family Courts: Recent Developments

### Summary

The current non-statutory definition of domestic abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

In the year ending March 2018, 6.1 percent of adults aged 16 to 59 years were victims of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse has numerous negative effects on victims and their children, as well as on the economy.

Domestic abuse is addressed through criminal prosecutions and civil injunctions. It often also surfaces in family law cases, such as divorce or child care arrangements. Family court proceedings can be a negative experience for victims of domestic abuse. Such proceedings can be used as a forum for abuse and control by perpetrators. Additionally, victims can feel that their experiences are minimised in proceedings and courts may not grant protective special measures.

In March 2018, the Government launched a consultation, *Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse*. It sought views on a draft domestic abuse bill and on the non-legislative proposals. On 21 January 2019, the Government published a draft bill “aimed at supporting victims and their families and pursuing offenders”. The bill would provide for a statutory definition of domestic abuse in England and Wales. It would also offer more protections for victims in criminal and civil justice proceedings. For example, prohibiting cross-examination in family courts and ensuring automatic eligibility for special measures in criminal courts.

The bill is currently subject to pre-legislative scrutiny by a joint committee (appointed on 14 March 2019). A number of experts have called for the bill to go further, for example, by providing for the automatic provision of protective special measures in family courts.

This briefing describes the extent and impact of domestic abuse in the UK. It outlines current information on victims’ experiences of family courts and the availability of in-court protections. The briefing then provides an overview of the draft bill and reaction to the proposals around family courts.

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## I. Domestic Violence and Abuse

### I.1 Definition

The current cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

This definition includes so called ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.<sup>1</sup>

This definition is non-statutory and was implemented in March 2013.<sup>2</sup>

### I.2 Prevalence and Impact

An estimated 1.3 million women and 695,000 men were victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales in the year ending March 2018. This totalled 6.1 percent of adults aged 16 to 59 years.<sup>3</sup> Between April 2014 and

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<sup>1</sup> Home Office, [Cross-government Definition of Domestic Violence—A Consultation: Summary of Responses](#), September 2012, p 19.

<sup>2</sup> Home Office, [Circular 003/2013: New Government Domestic Violence and Abuse Definition](#), 14 February 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics, [Domestic Abuse in England and Wales: Year Ending March 2018](#), 22 November 2018.

March 2017, 293 women (averaging 2 women a week) and 45 men were killed by a partner or ex-partner.

Looking more closely at intimate partner abuse (a subset of domestic abuse), academics have found that victims often suffer mental health symptoms. This includes anxiety, depression, suicidality and post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>4</sup> Victims also suffer long-term health deficits such as chronic pain.<sup>5</sup> In addition, intimate partner abuse may continue or even increase post-separation.<sup>6</sup>

Academics Gillinder Bedi and Chris Goddard of Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, have reviewed literature examining the effects of intimate partner abuse on children.<sup>7</sup> They concluded that intimate partner abuse frequently co-occurs with child abuse. Witnessing intimate partner abuse can also cause emotional and behavioural issues, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms and mood difficulties in children.

In January 2019, the Home Office published a report showing that domestic abuse causes economic harm.<sup>8</sup> In the year ending March 2017, domestic abuse was estimated to have cost over £66 billion in England and Wales. This included:

- £47.3 billion from physical and emotional harms incurred by victims;
- £14 billion arising from lost output due to time off work and reduced productivity as a consequence of domestic abuse;
- £2.3 billion in costs to health services; and
- £1.3 billion in costs to police.

Women's Aid noted that the effects of domestic abuse are "wide ranging and will differ for all victims".<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Maria A Pico-Alfonso et al, '[The Impact of Physical, Psychological, and Sexual Intimate Male Partner Violence on Women's Mental Health: Depressive Symptoms, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, State Anxiety, and Suicide](#)', *Journal of Women's Health*, 2006, vol 15 no 5, pp 599–611.

<sup>5</sup> Deborah Loxton et al, '[Intimate Partner Violence Adversely Impacts Health Over 16 Years and Across Generations: A Longitudinal Cohort Study](#)', *PLOS One*, 2017, vol 12 no 6.

<sup>6</sup> All-Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence, '[Domestic Abuse, Child Contact and the Family Courts](#)', 2016, p 4.

<sup>7</sup> Gillinder Bedi and Chris Goddard, '[Intimate Partner Violence: What Are the Impacts on Children?](#)', *Australian Psychologist*, March 2007, vol 42 no 1, pp 66–77.

<sup>8</sup> Home Office, '[The Economic and Social Costs of Domestic Abuse](#)', January 2019, p 6.

<sup>9</sup> Women's Aid Northern Ireland, '[Frequently Asked Questions](#)', accessed 20 May 2019.

## 2. Domestic Abuse and the Courts

### 2.1 Addressing Domestic Abuse in the Courts

One method of addressing domestic abuse is through the criminal justice system. There is currently no specific criminal offence of domestic abuse in England and Wales. It is addressed through prosecutions under criminal offences such as assault or threatening behaviour. Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 introduced a new offence of coercive or controlling behaviour.<sup>10</sup> In the year ending March 2018, 599,549 domestic abuse related offences were recorded by police. Around 89,091 prosecutions were recorded by the Crown Prosecution Service.<sup>11</sup> In the same period, 18.4% of female intimate partner abuse victims reported to the police. This represented a “significant” decrease of 7.4%. The rate was 25.8% in the year ending March 2015.<sup>12</sup> This was the previous occasion on which the question was asked in the Crime Survey of England and Wales.

Another method of addressing domestic abuse is through civil interventions. These include injunctions, such as non-molestation orders (preventing the abuser from harassing or intimidating the victim), and occupation orders (removing the abuser from the home), which were introduced under the Family Law Act 1996.<sup>13</sup> In total, 26,332 non-molestation orders and 2,308 occupation orders were made in the year ending March 2018.<sup>14</sup> Similar court orders can be obtained by the police and do not require the victim to support it. These domestic violence protection notices and orders (DVPNs and DVPOs) were implemented under the Crime and Security Act 2010.<sup>15</sup> In the year ending March 2018, 4,219 DVPNs and 4,878 DVPOs were granted.<sup>16</sup>

Domestic abuse is also an issue within the family court system. For example, these courts deal with private law separation disputes, such as divorce and child contact cases. In 2018, 45 percent of cases in family court were ‘matrimonial matters’. Parental disputes concerning the upbringing of children represented 20 percent of cases.<sup>17</sup> Intimate partner abuse has been found to be a factor in around half of child contact cases in England and

<sup>10</sup> Serious Crime Act 2015, section 76.

<sup>11</sup> Office for National Statistics, [‘Domestic Abuse in England and Wales: Year Ending March 2018’](#), 22 November 2018.

<sup>12</sup> Office for National Statistics, [‘Domestic Abuse: Findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: Year Ending March 2018’](#), 22 November 2018.

<sup>13</sup> Family Law Act 1996, section 30–63.

<sup>14</sup> Office for National Statistics, [‘Domestic Abuse in England and Wales: Year Ending March 2018’](#), 22 November 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Crime and Security Act 2010, section 24–33.

<sup>16</sup> Office for National Statistics, [‘Domestic Abuse in England and Wales: Year Ending March 2018’](#), 22 November 2018.

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Justice, [‘Family Court Statistics Quarterly, England and Wales, Annual 2018 Including October to December 2018’](#), 28 March 2019.

Wales.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence has found that victims of domestic abuse had reported “feeling re-victimised and re-traumatised through the family court process”.<sup>19</sup>

## 2.2 Experiences in the Family Court: Literature Review

A number of academics have researched the experiences of victims of domestic abuse in family court proceedings. Some state that abusive ex-partners use the courts as a forum for abuse and manipulate the system. According to a 2012 report by Rights of Women, a women’s charity providing legal information and advice, victims of domestic abuse suffer intimidation and harassment from their former partners. They also often feel unsafe during the court procedure.<sup>20</sup> In addition, Laurel Watson and Julie Ancis of Georgia State University in the United States, have found that abusers use tactics such as deliberately prolonging cases. These were perceived as attempts to force contact and maintain control.<sup>21</sup>

When litigants in the family court do not have legal representation, they cross-examine one another. A Women’s Aid report in 2018 found that 24 percent of their respondents had been cross-examined by their abusive ex-partner in family court. This was often traumatising for victims.<sup>22</sup>

Others have found that domestic abuse victims find their engagement with the family court system difficult. For instance, Christine Harrison from the University of Warwick has concluded that in private law proceedings, domestic abuse was “persistently minimized” and “dismissed as irrelevant”.<sup>23</sup> Lesley Laing from the University of Sydney, Australia, has found that accounts of engagement with the system often mirror domestic violence narratives.<sup>24</sup> This is known as ‘secondary victimisation’.

However, Families Need Fathers, a shared parenting charity, has suggested that fabricated or exaggerated claims of domestic abuse are made to obtain

<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Justice, [Outcomes of Applications to Court for Contact Orders after Parental Separation or Divorce](#), September 2008, p 9.

<sup>19</sup> All-Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence, [Domestic Abuse, Child Contact and the Family Courts](#), 2016, p 4.

<sup>20</sup> Rights of Women, [Picking up the Pieces: Domestic Violence and Child Contact](#), October 2012, pp 41–5.

<sup>21</sup> Laurel Watson and Julie Ancis, ‘[Power and Control in The Legal System: From Marriage/Relationship to Divorce and Custody](#)’, *Violence Against Women*, 2013, vol 19 no 2, pp 166–86.

<sup>22</sup> Women’s Aid and Queen Mary University of London, ‘[“What About My Right Not to be Abused?” Domestic Abuse, Human Rights and the Family Courts](#)’, 2018, p 27.

<sup>23</sup> Christine Harrison, ‘[Implacably Hostile or Appropriately Protective? Women Managing Child Contact in the Context of Domestic Violence](#)’, *Violence Against Women*, 2008, vol 14 no 4, pp 381–405.

<sup>24</sup> Lesley Laing, ‘[Secondary Victimization: Domestic Violence Survivors Navigating the Family Law System](#)’, *Violence Against Women*, 2017, vol 23 no 11, pp 1314–35.

a non-molestation order and secure legal aid.<sup>25</sup> It contended that there has been a 37.3 percent increase in non-molestation orders since the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012. The 2012 Act withdrew legal aid in all divorce cases except those where there is evidence of domestic abuse.<sup>26</sup> Women’s Aid has questioned whether there have been such false accusations.<sup>27</sup>

### 2.3 Special Measures

Special measures are “a series of provisions that help vulnerable and intimidated witnesses give their best evidence in court”.<sup>28</sup> They include using:

- Separate entrances and exits.
- Separate waiting rooms.
- A screen in court so that neither party can see the other.

Special measures were initially implemented in criminal courts by the Youth and Criminal Justice Evidence Act 1999.<sup>29</sup> They are automatically provided to child witnesses, witnesses with mental or physical disabilities and complainants of sexual offences. Victims of serious crime might also be regarded as ‘intimidated’, which includes victims of domestic abuse.

However, in family court, provisions for the use of special measures are not based in legislation but in the Family Procedure Rules 2010. These are rules setting out the way courts should deal with family proceedings. They include practice directions intended to protect victims. Practice direction 12J sets out the procedure for members of the judiciary dealing with child arrangements and contact order cases where domestic abuse is alleged. The direction was revised in October 2017 to improve the guidance for family judges on vulnerable users of the court system.

Practice direction 12J provides for special measures in proceedings involving children:

If at any stage the court is advised by any party (in the application form, or otherwise), by CAFCASS [the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service] or CAFCASS Cymru or otherwise that there is a need for special arrangements to protect the party or child attending any hearing, the court must ensure so far as practicable that

<sup>25</sup> Families Need Fathers, ‘[Analysis of Post LASPO Use of Non-molestation Orders](#)’, 15 October 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.

<sup>27</sup> Owen Bowcott, ‘[Parents “Weaponising” Domestic Violence Orders, Claims Charity](#)’, *Guardian*, 15 October 2018.

<sup>28</sup> Crown Prosecution Service, ‘[Special Measures](#)’, accessed 16 April 2019.

<sup>29</sup> Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999, section 16–33.

appropriate arrangements are made for the hearing (including the waiting arrangements at court prior to the hearing, and arrangements for entering and exiting the court building) and for all subsequent hearings in the case.<sup>30</sup>

In November 2017, the Ministry of Justice introduced a new practice direction 3AA. This sets out the recommended procedure for judges dealing with vulnerable persons in family proceedings (including those with concerns in relation to domestic abuse). It provides for special measures to ensure that the participation and quality of evidence of parties is not diminished. It states:

the court may use its general case management powers as it considers appropriate to facilitate the party’s participation. For example [...] whether (if facilities allow for it) the parties should be enabled to enter the court building through different routes and use different waiting areas.<sup>31</sup>

According to a 2012 Rights of Women report, special measures were not advertised in family court and were rarely offered at that time. Victims were often unaware of their availability and some requests were refused or questioned by judges.<sup>32</sup> A more recent report by Women’s Aid in 2018 found that 61 percent of domestic abuse victims who participated in their survey were not provided with special measures in family court.<sup>33</sup>

### 3. Draft Domestic Abuse Bill

#### 3.1 Background and Key Provisions

In its 2017 manifesto, the Conservative Party stated that it would deliver protections for victims of domestic abuse in law.<sup>34</sup> This was confirmed in the Queen’s Speech in June 2017, in which the Government committed to bring forward legislation.<sup>35</sup>

In March 2018, the Government launched a consultation entitled *Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse*. This sought “views on both legislative proposals for a landmark draft domestic abuse bill and a package

<sup>30</sup> Justice, ‘[Practice Direction 12J—Child Arrangements and Contact Orders: Domestic Abuse and Harm](#)’, accessed 20 May 2019, para 10.

<sup>31</sup> Justice, ‘[Practice Direction 3AA—Vulnerable Persons: Participation in Proceedings and Giving Evidence](#)’, accessed 20 May 2019, para 4.2.

<sup>32</sup> Rights of Women, ‘[Picking up the Pieces: Domestic Violence and Child Contact](#)’, October 2012, pp 41–5.

<sup>33</sup> Women’s Aid and Queen Mary University of London, ‘[“What About My Right Not to be Abused?” Domestic Abuse, Human Rights and the Family Courts](#)’, 2018, p 27.

<sup>34</sup> Conservative Party, *The Conservative Party Manifesto 2017*, 2017, p 48.

<sup>35</sup> [HL Hansard, 21 June 2017, cols 5–7.](#)



of practical action”.<sup>36</sup> It covered four key areas:

- Promoting awareness of domestic abuse.
- Protecting and supporting victims.
- Altering the justice process.
- Improving performance across agencies and sectors.<sup>37</sup>

In relation to family courts, the consultation asked: “Are there other aspects of the criminal court treatment of vulnerable people which the family court could learn from?”.

In January 2019, the Government’s response to the consultation stated that it had identified measures that required primary legislation. The response noted that although there were no specific questions about the family justice system in the consultation, “many [respondents] raised issues about the family courts”.<sup>38</sup>

A House of Commons Home Affairs Committee report on domestic abuse published in October 2018 had “urge[d] the Government to go further” with its draft bill.<sup>39</sup> It stated that the bill should prohibit the cross-examination of a victim by an alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse in the family court. It also highlighted that there was a lack of special measures in family courts at present. In its response, published in May 2019, the Government said it “recognise[d] that family court proceedings can be incredibly difficult for victims, and that in some cases victims have found the process re-traumatising”.<sup>40</sup>

The Government published a draft domestic violence bill alongside its consultation response in January 2019. The draft legislation would:

- introduce the first ever statutory government definition of domestic abuse to specifically include economic abuse and controlling and manipulative non-physical abuse;
- establish a domestic abuse commissioner to drive the response to domestic abuse issues;

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<sup>36</sup> Home Office and Ministry of Justice, ‘[Domestic Abuse Bill Consultation](#)’, 8 March 2018.

<sup>37</sup> HM Government, [Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse: Consultation Response and Draft Bill](#), January 2019, p 1.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*, p 66.

<sup>39</sup> House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, [Domestic Abuse](#), , 22 October 2018, HC 1015 of session 2017–19, p 3.

<sup>40</sup> House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, [Domestic Abuse: Government Response to the Committee’s Ninth Report of Session 2017–19](#), 7 May 2019, HC 2172 of session 2017–19, p 7.

- introduce new domestic abuse protection notices and domestic abuse protection orders to further protect victims and place restrictions on the actions of offenders;
- prohibit the cross-examination of victims by their abusers in the family courts; and
- provide automatic eligibility for special measures to support more victims to give evidence in the criminal courts.<sup>41</sup>

The Government also proposed non-legislative measures to sit alongside the bill. These included additional funding to support victims, a new crisis support system and updated training and guidance on economic abuse.<sup>42</sup> About family courts, the Government said it would provide £1 million in funding to organisations that provide in-court victim support. This was to enable them to:

- Explore options to develop a better and more consistent approach to information sharing across court jurisdictions.
- Introduce new powers to the family court system to prohibit direct cross-examination of a victim by their abuser.<sup>43</sup>

In addition, the Government has also asked all family courts to draw up local protocols setting out their operational procedures for dealing with vulnerable court users.<sup>44</sup>

The provisions of the draft bill would only extend to England and Wales. The bill is under pre-legislative scrutiny by a joint committee (appointed on 14 March 2019).

### 3.2 Reactions to the Draft Bill

Following the publication of the draft bill, Labour's Shadow Home Secretary, Diane Abbott, said that:

With many issues brought to family courts, it is welcome that the draft bill will include measures to outlaw the cross-examination of survivors of domestic abuse by perpetrators. But ministers must go further and give assurances about an independent inquiry into the culture, practice and outcomes of the family courts in child contact cases where there

<sup>41</sup> Home Office and Ministry of Justice, '[Government Publishes Landmark Domestic Abuse Bill](#)', 21 January 2019.

<sup>42</sup> HM Government, '[Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse: Consultation Response and Draft Bill](#)', January 2019, pp 86–95.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*, pp 92–3.

<sup>44</sup> House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, '[Domestic Abuse: Government Response to the Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2017–19](#)', 7 May 2019, HC 2172 of session 2017–19, p 7.

are allegations of domestic abuse.<sup>45</sup>

A cross-party group of MPs, along with campaigners and academics, have called for the bill to also apply to Northern Ireland.<sup>46</sup> In addition, Simon Blackburn, the chair of the Local Government Association's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, and Labour Councillor for Blackpool, highlighted funding. He argued that "any legislative changes in this bill must be matched with adequate resources and funding".<sup>47</sup>

The draft bill has been welcomed by charities such as Women's Aid and Safelives.<sup>48</sup> However, there have been calls for the bill to look more closely at issues that occur within family courts. For instance, Dr Hannah Bows, assistant professor in Criminal Law at Durham University, has argued that the bill "has a number of strengths". She warned though that it could become a "missed opportunity if the Government does not go further in their efforts to protect victims".<sup>49</sup> Concerns include that the proposed extension of special measures in criminal courts is not set to be mirrored in family courts. The campaign group End Violence Against Women released a statement that recognised the "ambition and determination" of the Government. However, it also expressed disappointment at certain provisions, particularly the "neglect [...] of women and children who do not have secure immigration status".<sup>50</sup>

On 2 April 2019, witnesses from End Violence Against Women and the charity Refuge gave oral evidence to the joint committee scrutinising the draft bill. They claimed that the bill was criminal justice-focused and should be broadened.<sup>51</sup> As the bill stands, the cross-examination ban would only take effect when there had been a conviction, caution or charge, or an injunction was in force. Olive Craig from the Rights of Women charity believes that a ban should occur after an allegation of abuse has been made. This view has been echoed by the Joint Committee on Human Rights.<sup>52</sup> However, in an oral evidence session on 21 May 2019, Edward Argar, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice, suggested

<sup>45</sup> Labour Party, '[Diane Abbott Responds to Publication of Domestic Abuse Bill](#)', 21 January 2019.

<sup>46</sup> Emma Vardy, '[Domestic Abuse: MPs Call for New Laws to Apply in NI](#)', BBC News, 16 February 2019.

<sup>47</sup> Local Government Association, '[LGA Responds to Draft Domestic Abuse Bill](#)', 21 January 2019.

<sup>48</sup> Adam Forrest, '[Government to Publish Domestic Abuse Bill Two Years After Pledging New Law](#)', *Independent* (£), 20 January 2019.

<sup>49</sup> Hannah Bows, '[The New Domestic Violence Laws Sound Good but they Could be Utterly Useless—Here's Why](#)', *Independent* (£), 21 January 2019.

<sup>50</sup> End Violence Against Women, '[Draft Domestic Abuse Bill: Some Good Measures, But Disappointment at Scope](#)', accessed 24 May 2019.

<sup>51</sup> Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill, '[Oral Evidence: Draft Domestic Abuse Bill, HC 2075](#)', 2 April 2019, Q2–46.

<sup>52</sup> UK Parliament website, '[Joint Committee on Human Rights probes Government on Draft Domestic Abuse Bill](#)', 11 April 2019.

that the present proposed prohibition on cross-examination is the “right approach for the family courts”.<sup>53</sup> He stated that judicial discretion can be used to prohibit cross-examination in situations where the threshold for automatic prohibition is not met.

In addition, Lucy Hadley, campaigns and public affairs officer at Women’s Aid, has contended that an automatic assumption that special measures are available for victims of domestic abuse should be parallel in both court systems.<sup>54</sup>

On 15 May 2019, a cross-party group of 120 MPs requested an independent inquiry into the treatment of victims of domestic abuse and violence in family courts.<sup>55</sup> On 21 May 2019, the Government announced that a panel of experts would review how the family courts protect children and parents in cases of domestic abuse.<sup>56</sup> Its remit includes examining the application of practice direction 12J. The panel is chaired by the Ministry of Justice and is to report within three months. A public call for evidence is also expected, geared towards collecting evidence on the experiences of those with direct involvement in domestic violence cases in the family court system. However, figures such as Louise Haigh, Shadow Minister of State for Policing, have stated that the review must be independent and underpinned by a data collection exercise.<sup>57</sup>

#### 4. Further Information

- HM Government, [Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse: Consultation Response and Draft Bill](#), January 2019
- Women’s Aid and Queen Mary University of London, [“What About My Right Not to be Abused?” Domestic Abuse, Human Rights and the Family Courts](#), 2018
- House of Commons Library, [Domestic Violence in England and Wales](#), 21 November 2018

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<sup>53</sup> Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill, [Oral Evidence: Draft Domestic Abuse Bill, HC 2075](#), 21 May 2019, Q292–3.

<sup>54</sup> Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill, [Oral Evidence: Draft Domestic Abuse Bill, HC 2075](#), 2 April 2019, Q13.

<sup>55</sup> Owen Bowcott and Peter Walker, [‘MPs Call for Inquiry Into How Family Courts Treat Rape and Abuse Survivors’](#), *Guardian*, 15 May 2019.

<sup>56</sup> Ministry of Justice, [‘Spotlight on Child Protection in Family Courts’](#), 21 May 2019.

<sup>57</sup> Louise Haigh, [‘Personal Twitter Account’](#), 21 May 2019.