



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**Rt Hon James Brokenshire**

*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and  
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**Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local  
Government**

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To all MPs in England

14 May 2019

Dear Colleague

At the 2017 General Election, the Prime Minister made a Manifesto commitment to review funding for refuges. The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy for 2016-20 set out our ambition to provide support for refuges and other accommodation-based services, helping local areas ensure that no victim is turned away from the support that they require at the time of need. We also committed to reviewing the locally-led approach to commissioning of domestic abuse services.

To meet these commitments, in January 2018 my Department began a full review of the funding and commissioning of domestic abuse services in England. We have worked closely with sector partners, drawing on their data, expertise and knowledge. Our review complements wider Government work on tackling this devastating crime and supporting victims, including our new Domestic Abuse Bill. We know that there are dedicated professionals delivering support to victims and their children in accommodation-based services across England. This support helps victims move from danger and abuse to safety and independence, and their children regain their childhoods, and includes the vital work of service managers and support staff, counsellors, outreach workers and play therapists. But we also know that we need to do more to ensure that all victims and their children can access this support at the right time, underpinned by a sustainable approach to providing it.

We understand that victims and their children will live in a variety of different forms of safe accommodation and will need support to stay safe and rebuild their lives in all of these. This includes outreach support to remain safe in properties with enhanced security measures, in emergency or temporary accommodation, in dispersed accommodation and in refuges. While refuge plays a critical role in supporting those victims at high risk of serious harm, we have deliberately kept our definition of 'accommodation-based' wide to include the full range of safe accommodation in which victims and their children may require support. This will help local areas meet

the support needs of diverse groups of victims and their children and those at lower and medium risk to prevent their needs from escalating.

I have announced that, for the first time ever, a legal duty will be placed on local authorities to deliver support to survivors of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation. While many local authorities are already providing tailored support to those fleeing domestic abuse, more needs to be done to ensure a consistent approach across the county so all families are able to recover and overcome their terrible experiences.

I want to safeguard provision of support, clarify expectations of governance and accountability, ensure needs assessments are undertaken, and enhance our understanding of service provision across England through monitoring and reporting. Local authorities will also be expected to work across boundaries to ensure domestic abuse services reflect the needs of local people as I also want to ensure the diverse needs of all victims and their children are met, including those with protected characteristics.

I believe that my announcement will help ensure more victims and their families better overcome their experiences and move on to live full and independent lives.

The consultation can be found at: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MHCLG-DAAccomodationServicesConsultation> and will be open until 2 August 2019.

A copy of the consultation document will be placed in the House Library.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Brokenshire', is centered on the page.

**RT HON JAMES BROKESHIRE MP**