



**domestic  
abuse  
commissioner**

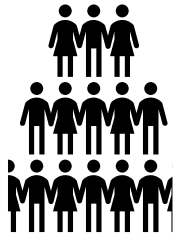


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**Domestic Abuse Commissioner  
Nicole Jacobs**

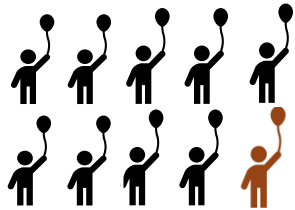
# In numbers

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**2.3 million**

adults affected by domestic abuse in year ending March 2020 (5.5% of adult population)



**1 in 10**

adults lived with domestic abuse as children

**54%**

Female residents at St Mungo's who have slept rough have experienced violence or abuse from a family member



**£66 billion**

The estimated annual cost of domestic abuse to society (year ending March 2017)

**1 in 5**

Homeless households were due domestic abuse between July and September 2021

# Purpose

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## The Domestic Abuse Commissioner

- Nicole Jacobs was appointed Designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner in September 2019. The passage of the Domestic Abuse Act saw her official appointment as the Commissioner.
- The Commissioner will play a key role in holding local and national Government to account in order to improve the response to domestic abuse and shining a light on both good and poor practice and policy.
- All statutory agencies and Government Departments will have a legal duty through the Domestic Abuse Bill to cooperate with the Commissioner and respond publicly to any of her recommendations within 56 days.

# The Domestic Abuse Act

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## Key elements

- Establish the Domestic Abuse Commissioner as a statutory office holder
- Create a statutory definition of Domestic Abuse
- Provide for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order
- Place a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation, as well as ensuring that anyone made homeless as a result of domestic abuse is automatic in priority need for housing
- A new standalone offence of non-fatal strangulation
- Prohibiting cross examination in the family courts and special measures in the criminal courts
- Criminalisation of threats to share intimate images

# Domestic Abuse Act: The Commissioner's Role

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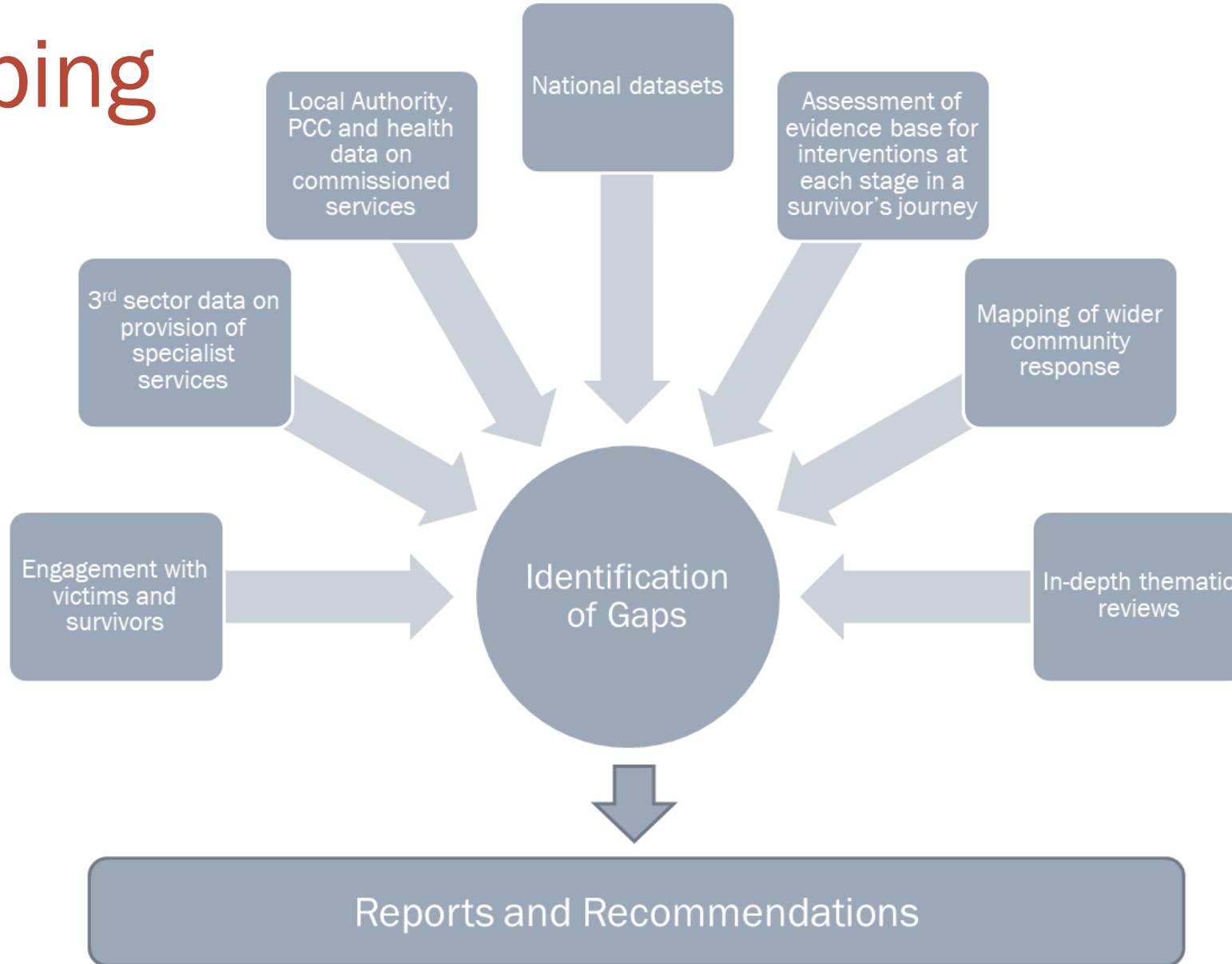
**Part 4 Oversight:** DA Commissioner will sit on Ministerial-led National Steering Group, established to monitor outcomes from local reporting – which now includes assessing the impact of the accommodation-based services duty on community-based services. .

**Mapping of CBS:** DAC Office's work to map the current provision of community-based services will be used to inform future decisions about expanding the new statutory duty to include these services.

**Duty to Cooperate:** Specified public bodies will be under a duty to cooperate with DA Commissioner - they and government Ministers will be required to respond to recommendations/requests made to them within 56 days.

**DHRs:** DHRs will be required to be shared with DAC Office as well as the Home Office. Ongoing discussion about national oversight mechanisms for DHRs and role for DA Commissioner

# Mapping



# Key policy priorities

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- Improving the experiences of survivors and their children in the family courts
- Improving support for migrant victims and survivors of domestic abuse
- Long-term sustainable funding for frontline domestic abuse services
- Creating an oversight mechanism on domestic homicide and suicides to better learn lessons needed to prevent future deaths

# Family Courts

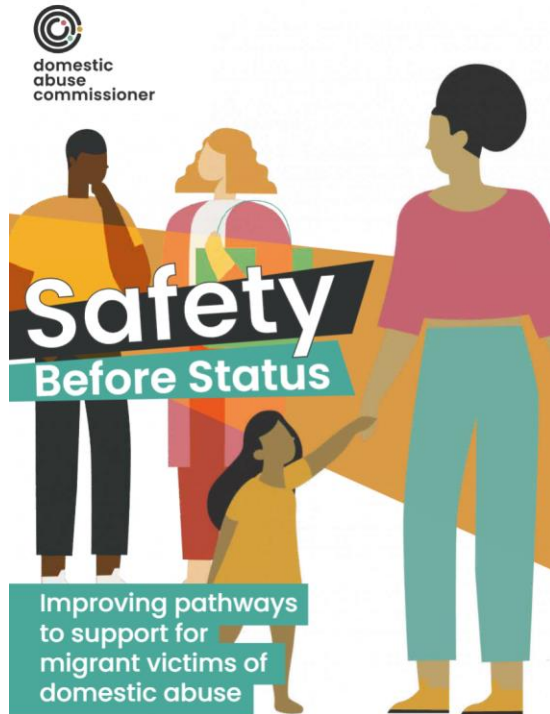
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- Following a recommendation made in the Harm Panel Report, our office has been working to establish a **monitoring and reporting mechanism** for how allegations of domestic abuse are treated in the Family Court
- We have now appointed two academics to **design the pilot stage** of the mechanism and will be publishing our proposals for this shortly. In the coming months, we will also be **launching our first policy report** into the Family Court, which sets out the Commissioner's vision for cultural change
- More broadly, the Commissioner has been sitting on various family court reform panels, including the **Family Justice Reform Implementation Group** and the **Presumption of Parental Involvement Review Panel**



# Support for migrant survivors

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## Safety Before Status (October 2021):

- Victims/survivors of domestic abuse with NRPF forced to stay with abusers or face homelessness and destitution when they flee;
- We need to see better understanding of immigration abuse – whereby perpetrators use victims/survivors insecure immigration status as a tool of coercive control;
- The risk that police and other public services pass information to immigration enforcement means that migrant victims fear reporting abuse.

## NRPF research (July 2022):

DAC has commissioned LSE to conduct quantitative research which will:

- Estimate the number of victims/survivors of DA with NRPF;
- Costing and cost benefit of different pathways to support;
- Inform long-term decision-making following Home Office Support for Migrant Victims Pilot.

# Long-term sustainable funding for sector

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- **For victims and survivors of domestic abuse accessing support, 70% of them will do so via community-based services.** Despite their clear value, community-based services have faced fragile funding landscape.
- **The Commissioner is calling for a new duty within the forthcoming Victims' Bill on relevant public bodies to collaborate and commission community-based services.**
- This new duty would provide support to all victims and survivors, including children. And would include the provision of 'by-and-for' services.
- This would enable support for prevention, early intervention and crisis intervention, and provide programmes to challenge perpetrator behaviour and prevent abuse going forward.

# How will DA Act affect social workers?

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Statutory  
definition

Children as  
victims

Extension of  
coercive control  
offence

LA  
accommodation  
duty (Part 4)

DAPOs and  
disclosure  
scheme (Clare's  
Law)

Homelessness  
eligibility

Duties to co-  
operate with DAC

# Social work and the CCR

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Examples include the Pathfinder and Whole Housing Toolkits

## The Commissioner recommends

- The use of IDVA and ISVA colocation within statutory agencies as equal partners, embedding their expertise and providing opportunity for meaningful collaboration
- Ensure that front line staff are making routine enquiries about domestic abuse and reporting issues accordingly, learning from the “Ask and Act” initiative in Wales
- Review and update organisational policies, procedures and protocols in relation to DA, with input from the specialist VAWG sector
- Invest in case management systems across statutory agencies and specialist services that better “speak” to each other and facilitate more effective, faster information-sharing

# Q&A

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