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30 June 2022

*Dear Baroness Hayter,*

Following on from the Grand Committee debate of 27 June on the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence I wanted to write to you to clarify the current position with regards to migrant victims leaving their abusive partner or spouse.

The Destitute Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC) was introduced specifically to support migrant victims of domestic abuse who had entered the UK on certain spousal or partner visas. The intention is to safeguard eligible victims by offering them an immigration status independent of the abusive partner so that they do not remain in an abusive relationship out of fear for their immigration status.

Migrant victims of domestic abuse on these spouse or partner visas are granted three months leave to remain independent of their abusive sponsor when their relationship has broken down because of domestic violence, they are destitute, and they intend to subsequently make an application for indefinite leave to remain as a victim of domestic abuse (DVILR). These victims can then claim public funds for those three months while their application to settle in the UK is considered. We grant DVILR in cases where we accept the evidence submitted that a relationship has broken down due to domestic abuse.

The current eligibility requirements recognise people who have entered the UK with a legitimate expectation of settlement on the basis of their relationship with a British citizen or settled person. To be eligible for these policies, an individual's last grant of leave must have been on a spouse, civil partner, unmarried partner or same-sex partner visa in a relationship with a British citizen or settled person. Other cohorts, such as those with refugee leave or the partners of those with pre-settled status via the EU Settlement Scheme, are also eligible to apply for the DDVC and DVILR.

However, migrant victims of domestic abuse who are dependants of other sponsors such as students and workers are excluded from the DDVC and DVILR, hence the current need for a reservation on Article 59 of the Istanbul Convention.

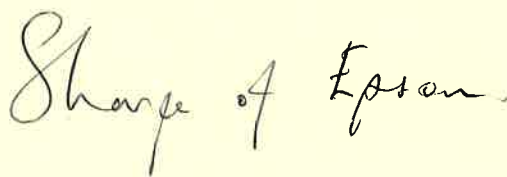
They can also face additional barriers in accessing support, which is why, last year, we launched the Support for Migrant Victims Scheme pilot. The purpose of the pilot, and independent evaluation by Behavioural Insights Ltd, is to ensure we understand

the circumstances and experiences of migrant victims who fall outside of the current provisions and what support they require during their time within the scheme.

The Domestic Abuse Commissioner's office has also undertaken its own research and evaluation on migrant victims with no recourse to public funds. The research will estimate the number of migrant victims of domestic abuse with no recourse to public funds, explore the costings of potential models of support, and outline proposals on how the Government can further improve the policy response to victims of domestic abuse with 'insecure immigration status'.

We will be carefully considering these evaluations which will enable us to have a robust evidence base to inform future policy decisions to further support migrant victims and survivors.

I hope this clarifies current government policy.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharpe of Epsom".

**LORD SHARPE OF EPSOM OBE**

The Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town  
House of Lords