



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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Yvette Cooper MP
Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee
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14 January 2021

Dear Yvette,

As you will know, the Government has been conducting a review into support in the workplace for victims of domestic abuse. I am writing to inform you that the report of this review is being published today.

This review is a part of the Government's agenda to raise awareness and build understanding about the devastating impact of domestic abuse on victims and their families. The landmark Domestic Abuse Bill, led by the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice, aims to ensure that victims have the confidence to come forward and report their experiences, safe in the knowledge that the state will do everything it can, both to support them and their children and to pursue the abuser. The Bill includes a wide range of measures to better protect and support victims of domestic abuse and their children for the long term.

Alongside the measures in the Bill, we know that accessing and remaining in work is vital for victims of domestic abuse. Work provides not only an income, and the security that brings, but also opportunities to make social connections, and maintain health and wellbeing. For individuals experiencing domestic abuse, the workplace itself can also be a place of safety and respite from the abuser, and a place where they can make the arrangements they need and contact specialist services.

To inform this report, BEIS launched a call for evidence in June seeking evidence of how workplaces can most effectively support victims of domestic abuse. This received 126 written responses from individuals, representatives of victims, employers and their representatives, trade unions and others with interest. We also held a series of roundtables and meetings to discuss the issues in more depth with the Designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner, the Victims Commissioner, trade unions, specialist domestic abuse charities and service providers, employers and their representatives across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

With the right support and encouragement, employers can play a key role in helping to lift the lid on this often hidden and always hideous crime. The report considers what pragmatic, effective new measures could be put in place in the workplace by Government and employers. It is structured around three main themes:

- Raising awareness and understanding of the impacts that domestic abuse can have on individuals and employers.
- Building and sharing best practice among employers.

- The role that employment rights play in addressing the needs of victims of domestic abuse.

The work does not end with this report. We will work together with employers, representatives of victims and trade unions to continue to build awareness and understanding of domestic abuse and drive good practice across the board.

I am very grateful to the Home Affairs Select Committee for the work you have undertaken on this important issue, and for your continued efforts to keep it in focus. I note in particular that the Committee, under your predecessor as Chair, recommended that Government should explore the option of leave for domestic abuse victims. The evidence provided showed that needs of victims vary, but that flexibility can be helpful in situations where victims engage with different services. We will take forward the Manifesto commitment to consult on ways to ensure that flexible working becomes the default for everyone, which we know will benefit individuals experiencing domestic abuse. We will also prepare a consultation on further steps to help victims of domestic abuse in the workplace, for example, on how to support them to access existing employment rights such as flexible working more effectively.

The report can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workplace-support-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse>

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Scully', is centered below the text 'Yours sincerely,'.

PAUL SCULLY MP
Minister for Small Business, Consumers & Labour Markets
Minister for London