



Andy Slaughter MP
Chair, Justice Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

MoJ ref: SUB122306

14 March 2025

Dear Andy,

LEGAL AID FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE VICTIMS

I am pleased to inform you that yesterday the Ministry of Justice laid a draft affirmative Statutory Instrument (SI). This SI, if approved by Parliament, would make a number of important changes to legal aid scope for domestic abuse victims, helping ensure legal aid is available for those who need it most.

In brief, the SI contains the following measures which will amend the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 and associated regulations:

- a) Changes to the scope of immigration legal aid to make legal aid available for those who are eligible to apply for leave to enter or remain in the UK under Appendix Victim of Domestic Abuse to the Immigration Rules, to ensure that all eligible domestic abuse victims can access legal aid for applications under this immigration route.
- b) Changes to the evidence requirements for domestic abuse to ensure that victims can provide overseas medical evidence from appropriate health professionals for legal aid applications in domestic abuse cases.
- c) Changes to terminology to align with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, replacing 'domestic violence' with 'domestic abuse', 'financial abuse' with 'economic abuse' and recognising that abuse against an individual (B) may be consistent of behaviour directed at another individual (e.g., B's child).
- d) Changes that complement orders made in 2023 and 2024, in relation to the scope of legal aid for Domestic Abuse Protection Orders and Domestic Abuse Protection Notices, to ensure full availability of legal aid for individuals in respect to these orders.

I hope you will agree that this is a welcome piece of secondary legislation that will ensure that the legal aid scheme continues to serve some of the most vulnerable people in our society who need our support, as well as ensuring that our legal aid legislation is aligned with wider government legislation on domestic abuse and immigration. I look forward to the debates in Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

SARAH SACKMAN KC MP
Minister Of State