



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
David Lammy MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Lord Chancellor & Secretary
of State for Justice

SIR GEOFFREY CLIFTON-BROWN MP
CHAIR, PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

MoJ Ref: ADR132683

17 March 2026

Dear Sir Geoffrey,

NATIONAL ROLLOUT OF CHILD FOCUSED MODEL IN FAMILY COURTS

I am writing to update the Public Accounts Committee that today, 17 March, I am announcing the national rollout of the Child Focused Model, formerly known as the Private Law Pathfinder, in the family courts.

The Child Focused Model implements substantial reform to private law children's proceedings. With the help and close collaboration of hard-working professionals across the family justice system, the model delivers improvements to the court process and to the outcomes experienced by children and parents involved in these cases, including where domestic abuse has been a feature.

I am committed to ensuring that victims of domestic abuse and other harms are better supported through the family courts. I know you and the members of the Committee share this objective. The national rollout of the Child Focused Model will contribute to this through coordinated early identification of risk in the family court, ensuring that children are heard, and that victims of domestic abuse are provided with specialist support.

The model was first piloted in Dorset and North Wales in 2022, and learning from these original pilots has informed our approach to implementation in other areas. Evidence from across the existing pilot areas shows it is working. The model reduces the number of cases returning to court, protecting children and families from further trauma. The length of time families are in proceedings has reduced significantly, with cases being resolved up to seven and a half months faster. The backlog in pilot court areas more than halved, freeing up capacity for other proceedings. Learning suggests the model is leading to significantly fewer cases per hearing and improvements in timeliness. The model requires all the dedicated professionals, magistrates and judges in our family courts to collaborate better and adopt a problem-solving approach. A published process evaluation found professionals are working more closely together and hearing the voice of the child.

The model is currently in 10 of 43 court areas across England and Wales including all of Wales, Dorset, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Birmingham, the West Midlands and West Yorkshire. In my statement of 25 February, I announced further expansion in 2026/27.

The next areas to start the model will be Northumbria and North Durham, Cleveland and South Durham, Lancashire, Cumbria, York and North Yorkshire, Cheshire and Merseyside, Northamptonshire, and Coventry and Warwickshire. These areas will all start the model in Autumn 2026.

You will recall you recommended in September 2025 that the Ministry of Justice publish a plan and timeline for the wider rollout of this model. I will publish this in Summer 2026, alongside a Target Operating Model for the Child Focused Model, as part of a cross-system Family Justice Strategy.

This Government remains steadfast in its commitment to tackle the scourge of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG). We are committed to halving VAWG within a decade, supported by systemic change across society and sustained support for victims right across the justice system.

I trust this letter is helpful to the Committee and further detail will be set out in my statement to the House.

Yours ever,

RT HON DAVID LAMMY MP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

**DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
LORD CHANCELLOR AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR JUSTICE**