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|  **DAC office November newsletter**         |
| Hello! Welcome to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's November newsletter where you will find updates from our office, the domestic abuse sector, government and more. Very best wishes, The DAC Office  |
|   **From the DAC team**  |
|  **Firewall briefing** * We published our briefing – [Safety Before Status: How to ensure the Victims and Prisoners Bill meets the needs of all victims](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=?=Ogk-;lhsu%3c7AA|%5eYO@/7AA|FDHUOKUw4AA|t*zc6AA|t-(6AA|7AA|gjevugxu%5dC%3cLEJMpRX4AA|7AA|EN:bLSbDTgQ%3cJNE\\FYYYB@PN%3c9JG%5eLQDN;depLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP) – on 9th November.
* It revealed that all police forces in England & Wales had shared the data of migrant domestic abuse survivors with Immigration Enforcement.
* In order to stop this practice that prevents survivors from coming forward, the Commissioner is calling on government to implement a Firewall in the Victims & Prisoners Bill.
* We got some great press coverage from the BBC, Guardian and Independent which you can see [here](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=f4AA|A9YC7AA|HO%5eRJ@NLbDTgQ%3cJNE\\FYYYB@PN%3c9JG%5eLQDN;depLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP).

**Victims & Prisoners Bill event** * We hosted a virtual event for the Victims and Prisoners Bill on 15th November.
* The Commissioner spoke about our office’s priorities for the Bill: ensuring that support is offered to all victims and survivors, through expansion of provision of community-based services and support for migrant victims and survivors to report domestic abuse to the police and other statutory services.
* Read our briefing for the Bill [here](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=rIXULfNO4AA|HGZG\Is;M8bOIBMBHU%5eAGPp%5bLRsQMDC4AA|CJIg%5d@Z@E%3cDN4AA|bDTgQ%3cJNE\\FYYYB@PN%3c9JG%5eLQDN;depLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP).

**Take part in the Commissioner's Domestic Homicide Oversight Mechanism pilot** * The Domestic Abuse Commissioner is inviting expressions of interest from Community Safety Partnerships and Police and Crime Commissioners to take part in a 12-monthpilot of two local domestic homicide oversight models.
* The deadline for expressions of interest is 1st December 2023.
* If you have a lead role or DHR role within your local CSP or PCC area and would like more information on the local oversight pilot and how to express an interest, please [get in touch](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=UTcSHA7AA|%5bLO=Z%3cO%3c?JEaKDMN@OREVVLOQ%5dT=4AA|%3cCLZCWHPq1yypKMEH@LnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP).

**Survivor network launch** * Our virtual survivor network, VOICES at the DAC, will be launching in the new year.
* Survivors will be able to sign up to the virtual platform, to hear of engagement opportunities in our office and beyond.
* We will be sharing more information about the network and sign up closer to the launch, but if you would like more information at this stage, please [get in touch](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=Hat7AA|NBeMH=KLOIQ;M@cNAGHHRR@ILKLNPaNKBDQL?EVB*LQ:HFQpKMEH@LnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP).

**Are you delivering or wanting to deliver lived experience work in, or on behalf of a local authority?** * In our recent survey of those delivering survivor engagement, respondents were particularly keen to hear hearing of how others are implementing this work, and to have the opportunity to network with them.
* In response to this we will be hosting our online ‘Local Authority Lived Experience Good Practice Networking’ event on Tuesday 12th December, 10.00-12.00.
* Come and hear how three different local authorities are engaging survivors, and network with peers. Please [get in touch](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=Hat7AA|NBeMH=KLOIQ;M@cNAGHHRR@ILKLNPaNKBDQL?EVB*LQ:HFQpKMEH@LnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP) if you wish to attend.

**Supporting Male Victims of Abuse Day** * It was Supporting Male Victims of Abuse Day on 2nd November.
* To mark this, we spoke to Behind Closed Doors, a domestic abuse service in Leeds which has been running dedicated domestic abuse service for men since 2011.
* You can read the blog [here](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=hJT_CQKq\O%5b%5bNf?BLIDJeNGU?D9depLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP).

  **Advance notice of request for information: domestic abuse services for children** * In January, the Commissioner will request that each Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board coordinates the response from their area about the provision of services for children affected by domestic abuse.
* To help each authority to prepare we will write guidance and arrange webinars explaining the request in more detail and how to respond. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the request, please get in touch.

**DAC staffing updates** * Our Head of Policy Hannah Gousy has now left for her maternity leave and Georgie Hagan is in post to cover her in the interim.

  **In case you missed it…** * An [interview](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=IFN@oVO=Z@hCHPDb?QrOgQ*T45AA|V\wc2AA|n/uljQ2AA|XQ@ATckT'AbQDAFPB5AA|rvivxsK@PGOG*g%5e4AA|Z_RNJ@JBPgDQF?g4AA|N7AA|e!ydg@D:LG%5bQNH%5eGMCdepLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP) with the Commissioner about her vision for the Family Court was published in Counsel Magazine’s October edition (pages 30-32).
* The Commissioner [spoke to BBC Breakfast](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=gzso6AA|ytjiohldrqze2AA|bhJPP=MLhz2AA|IAMKR\PUYWNxfFI;oPOM7AA|@VKdepLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP) on the need for sustainable funding for domestic abuse services and accredited perpetrator interventions (21/11/23).
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|   **From government**  |
| **Government reshuffle** * Several relevant ministerial changes were made in the recent government reshuffle.
* James Cleverly has replaced Suella Braverman as Home Secretary.
* Sarah Dines has stepped down as Safeguarding Minister. In her place, Edward Argar’s role has changed to Minister for Prisons, Parole and Probations, and Laura Farris has been appointed Minister for Victims and Safeguarding.
* Victoria Atkins has replaced Steve Barclay as Health Secretary.
* Lee Rowley has replaced Rachel Maclean as Housing Minister.

  **Victims and Prisoners Bill to return to parliament** * The Victims and Prisoners Bill will return to the House of Commons for its report stage and third reading on 4th December.
* You can follow the progress of the Bill [here](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=igglhRCHH4AA|rTRt7AA|XDH4AA|BFJHNrLXCH9depLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP).

  **Government’s Autumn Statement announcement** * The Government announced a £12 million funding boost for a new ‘Tackling the Economic Impacts of Domestic Abuse Fund’ in the Autumn Statement this week.
* Whilst the Commissioner welcomes this, domestic abuse has a significant personal cost to victims and an economic cost to society of at least £74bn in a year and we are keen to see more sustainable funding put in place.
* Read the Commissioner’s full response [here](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=r%5dKQYOS%3cQLaFTS%5eNM%5eD?OcKM7AA|RCMFLRA%5bpOQZYHNPBGEVAq%3cUKR%3cHK@bDTgQ%3cJNE\\FYYYB@PN%3c9JG%5eLQDN;depLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP).

  **Government response to the DAC Family Court report** * In July we presented a report to government calling for reform in the Family Court. We received a [response](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=eMNAQQXfNF7AA|HGPRS;Y8fI@P=4AA|KFfSL4AA|fP%5b%5eLOscKDJ:@_LF%5e7AA|Z@fJP?K?7AA|BHQKJD?pMIUTMfNQG?EUPOO%5b4AA|fJ@IK%3cEDVfIAMKR\PUYWN4AA|d4AA|MMI?q%3cUKR%3cHK@bDTgQ%3cJNE\\FYYYB@PN%3c9JG%5eLQDN;depLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP) on 15th November.
* We welcome our shared vision for the Family Court, but we mustn’t lose sight of the need for wider reform. We look forward to working with the Ministry of Justice to bring about the change that is needed.

**King’s Speech** * The [King’s Speech](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=PCKeL?LVLI@Z@E%3cDN4AA|8=MTNICJ?JK%3cTOODK08M7NLS$K%3cG5AA|dm@%3c=mjkbfiAxwgRxyrfi:hgwgKBP%3cL7AA|FQdOHFgD:EUNN\eSZSGNFE%3cMWf%5dMQJR8depLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP) took place on 7th November.
* The criminal justice system was a focus in the measures announced, along with violence against women and girls being named a priority.
* Read the Commissioner’s [response](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=fTOODKP7AA|M?UGU7AA|Q?S%5eIEcLFQNE%3cNfALRQ_aTfG4AA|GCEPPM7AA|%5bKfJ?JKILDQfIAMKR\PUYWN4AA|d4AA|MMI?q%3cUKR%3cHK@bDTgQ%3cJNE\\FYYYB@PN%3c9JG%5eLQDN;depLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP) which urges government go further to truly deliver for domestic abuse victims.

  **Online Safety Act becomes law** * The [Online Safety Act](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=a:X%5eR%3cHK?4AA|;fKK@4AA|fCWRAMQVf?IKIOnQK7AA|QEHCIKcK4AA|E@R%5eAAcX%5dd_7AA|VT?4AA|7AA|4AA|FHeX4AA|%5e;K@C?cDNhRV%3cJhPWNJZ%5eOUJDbEMoTY@tNVNdepLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP) received Royal Assent in October – officially becoming law.
* This Commissioner responded, saying that this legislation is a significant step forward in protecting victims of domestic abuse from online harm. Now we must ensure the accompanying statutory guidance is ambitious and robust.
* As the regulator of the new Online Safety Act, OFCOM Act has [launched](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=OGUCMFbPJ4AA|MMNB%5eH@CNUIUsWNMC7AA|?DWMOIs4AA|M@O?AMHQOhbcXNXPB7AA|MMhNQG?ELRKM_%5eCE%3ccOGHHS@KHTOWX@uW_gBOHbEVAPHtNVNdepLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP) its first of four consultations, covering illegal harms, open for responses until 23 Feb 2024.
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|   **From the sector**  |
| **Women’s Aid Road to Refuge scheme** * Women’s Aid and National Express have launched the [Road to Refuge](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=pCQNR%3cQ%5eJPcE4AA|U@QKeRNNKJQYqQPL7AA|AFPR\H\GTJdK@7AA|4AA|VfS8DVeT%5eeS%5eYg?F:MFLKYPtNVNdepLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP) scheme.
* The scheme provides women, men and children escaping domestic abuse with free National Express coach travel to reach safe accommodation and support.

  **IKWRO True Honour awards** * Nominations are open for IKWRO’s 2024 True Honour Awards which celebrate individuals and organisations who have taken a stand against ‘honour’ based abuse.
* You can find out more or submit a nomination [here](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=dO@K:V@fIQNJXQdQa\SdHNb?YMrH%5eNJ@depLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP). The deadline is 15th January 2024, and the awards ceremony will be in March 2024.

  **WEVAW awards** * The winners of the ‘Write to End Violence Against Women and Girls’ (WEVAW) awards will be announced during the virtual awards ceremony on 28th November (16:30-18:00). Sign up for the event [here](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=pcljnz!n2AA|yypbPM?CJG%5e7AA|ycicbO@K:V@fEALK7AA|pQ_ZS@B4AA|7AA|?;UCVHUMf;IAcHMfDS@NVeNrJ%5bOrDOFK%3cLUC7AA|4AA|tNVNdepLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP).
* The awards, run by Zero Tolerance and EVAW, celebrate journalists and writers who bring stories of gender inequality and VAWG to light in a responsible, accurate, and sensitive way.
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**Respect’s 5-year strategy** * Respect launched their [5-year strategy](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=RS%3cS8MPO7AA|KTNhJAF=YrQQZrJPeM==WQOKtNVNdepLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP) on 31st October.
* The strategy outlines their unique role as a membership body, as well as setting out their updated vision, focus, mission and values.

  **International Men’s Day** * It was International Men’s Day on 19th November.
* To mark the day, Respect shared a [blog](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=DMHCcD?R_AMs%5dfIBFa=ORqG%5b%5eMFDOQE%3cMHfdhihpb4AA|Ps%5dfIBFaDHLYB7AA|8MI@PJBbRDK:ESNJrQQZrJPeM==WQOKtNVNdepLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP) on how they make their Men’s Advice Line more accessible.
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|   **Other updates**  |
| **Concerns about patient records being available on the NHS app** * As of 1st November, patients are able to access their records via the NHS app on their smartphone.
* The domestic abuse sector has concerns about how this will impact survivors, as their medical information will be more easily accessible.
* Until further agreements have been made, survivors can either let their GP practice know if they wish to opt-out, or uninstall the NHS app.

  **National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) & National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC)presentation** * The NCSC has developed a presentation in collaboration with the Cyber PROTECT network and NPCC, covering guidance to practitioners working with victims of technology-facilitated domestic abuse, stalking and harassment.
* A flyer with more information is attached.

  **Assessing data protection practices of UK tracing agents (Information Commissioner’s Office)** * Concerns were raised earlier this year about perpetrators’ uses of a ‘tracing agents’ to track down survivors of domestic abuse.
* In one case a perpetrator managed to trace the survivor to the refuge they were staying at.
* The Information Commissioner’s Office has responded to this in a [blog](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=hO%5dWBSMqFIF%3c;J%5beUNs=N%5eNA?BMB@QGcMKR%5d@Q7AA|YQKd:N9KeQGUJR%3cNO=bdjhlcfke\PLXNqCI4AA|7AA|MOLLs4AA|%5eKM%3c4AA|c=B=DLhF?HcNQQs7AA|_N=4AA|bEMoE\HtFB@depLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP).

  **New reports &briefings** * [Life insurance and economic abuse](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=h@%3cOfIX%5bCsSXHABBL:nUOGs8f%3cNQ4AA|:7AA|BHLFJN?NpAZMqD4AA|K:LMZLS7AA|Q=HCdOS4AA|GhFQFdDO%5eK4AA|OUWNIL%3c??UG7AA|BbITJdepLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP) – briefing from Surviving Economic Abuse (08/11/23)
* [Life or Death: Preventing Domestic Homicides and Suicides of Black and Minoritised women](https://response.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeofficeR4/cresponse.asp?load=GSDRmcjFPmLaUTTRyGbb%5dK%3cNRSgJGtQ\8ncjeheckhR%3cP@@Y%5efWarFMLaH9HIWBtNVNdepLISSGnHQQ%5dij$2AA|xrjgeqEL%5e3AA|cxgln?EP) –Imkaan & CJS report (16/11/23)
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