

## Domestic Abuse Bill 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Briefing – Drive

### About Drive

Drive is a perpetrator intervention that challenges and holds high-harm perpetrators – those who have been assessed as at risk of murdering or seriously harming their partners – to account. The BBC covered our work [here](#).

Drive has been shown by the University of Bristol to improve victim safety, reduce abusive behaviour, and reduce police recorded domestic abuse.

Drive is continuing to work during the coronavirus epidemic, indeed our work to manage the risks that perpetrators pose to those around them is more important than ever. There is more information about the costs and benefits of Drive at the bottom of this paper.

### Second Reading Summary for MPs

If you are only raising three things we'd ask you to make the following points:

1. **The Bill does not provide resources for domestic abuse services.** These are needed now in the corona context and beyond. We welcome the Government's commitment to creating a fund – a minimum of £65m is needed to keep services going for 6 months. Funding will be required post lockdown as a surge in demand is expected, and longer-term to ensure the future sustainability of the sector. Amendment two below would ensure the Bill fully funds victim and perpetrator provision.
2. **Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs) need to go hand in hand with availability of *quality assured* preventative services, like behaviour change programmes, to actually have an impact.** Due to lack of funds these services are currently very sparse. A system of quality assurance is needed to ensure such programmes improve victim safety (and do not do more harm than good).
3. **Government should publish a domestic abuse perpetrator strategy.** This is being widely called for across those involved in the domestic abuse response.

### Amendments we hope you will support

1. **Quality assurance to ensure judge mandated programmes do no harm:** We are proposing an amendment to ensure that interventions required as a result of the new DAPO, such as behaviour change programmes ordered by judges, meet a minimum quality standard. This amendment will require the Home Secretary to publish standards (separately from the Bill) which providers of perpetrator programmes must meet. Such standards already exist and could form the backbone of the Home Secretary's guidance.
2. **Statutory duty to provide services:** We support Barnardo's amendment calling for a widened statutory duty on public bodies, with the requisite funding, to provide services to victims of domestic abuse, including children and suitable specialist perpetrator responses.

These are our priority amendments. We support a number of others listed in a cross sector briefing to which we have signed up.

## More detail: What do we think of the Bill?

We welcome many of the changes in the Bill, including the new definition of Domestic Abuse and improvements to court arrangements for victims.

*However, we think that a strategic approach to perpetrators is missing. It is simply impossible to prevent or end domestic abuse without responding to the people causing the harm.*

### 1. Resources – coronavirus and beyond

We note that the domestic abuse sector, including the perpetrator response, needs urgent support to cope with the surge in demand for domestic abuse services during lockdown, and to provide extra support for victims who are unable to even call for help.

*This Bill, though much anticipated and very welcome, will not provide the immediate help required. Money promised by the Chancellor in his budget, and then on 8<sup>th</sup> April and subsequently by Priti Patel on 11<sup>th</sup> April, will help, but is not yet forthcoming. Government needs to make this money flow urgently.*

Resources are also needed in the longer term. The Chancellor announced £10million for perpetrator work in his budget in March. This was very welcome. However, our understanding is that this money has to be spent by spring 2021, and therefore does not provide the long-term response needed to go hand-in-hand with the provisions in the Bill. This is despite an estimate (in the government's impact assessment for the Bill) that the new DAPOs will generate a need for 15,200 extra places on behaviour change and drug and alcohol programmes.

### 2. The need for perpetrator programmes to be AVAILABLE AND SAFE to get the most out of Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs)

Recent data – including the independent evaluation of Drive - has shown that perpetrator interventions can be effective at changing behaviour and making victims safer.

*There is a welcome provision in the Bill enabling judges to mandate participation on behaviour change programmes as part of the new DAPOs (DA Protection Orders). However, this is likely to have little, no or even negative effect until such programmes are widely available and quality assured.*

#### a. Availability

Due to limited funding some areas have no such programmes and no single area in England or Wales has an adequate range or volume of programmes. Less than 1% of perpetrators receive a specialist intervention to address their behaviour.

#### b. Quality Assurance

We are also concerned that the Bill is silent on quality control of perpetrator work. This work can be risky both for the professionals involved and if done badly, for the associated victims. If DAPOs do mark the beginning of an area where perpetrators are challenged to change, then the government has a responsibility to ensure this work is a safe and effective.

Strong quality assurance systems for perpetrator work already exist, there is just no requirement in the Bill that they are used. In other words, when a judge orders a perpetrator onto a programme, without an amendment to the Bill, there is no guarantee of the safety or effectiveness of that programme.

### 3. The need for a perpetrator strategy

Domestic abuse is form of violent crime. Over a third of all ‘violence against the person’ crimes recorded by police are domestic abuse.<sup>1</sup> If we want to make progress on reducing violent crime (as per the Prime Minister’s 20% reduction target) we need to think about reducing domestic abuse, not just responding to it once its already happened. There are proven ways of doing this.

**Perpetrator interventions:** The Drive project has been shown to reduce the number of perpetrators using physical abuse by 82% and jealous and controlling behaviour by 73%. It is similarly effective at reducing other types of abuse.

Drive is for perpetrators who have been assessed as posing a very high risk. There are other evaluated programmes responding effectively to perpetrators at both high and lower risk levels. Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes (DVPP) use group work to change attitudes and challenge behaviour. Early intervention programmes build communities’ ability to recognise abusive behaviour and get help. Yet there are no government proposals on the table for any national strategy to make this range of crucial interventions available everywhere.

**Changing the public narrative and upskilling professionals:** There has been important work funded by government on identifying victims of domestic abuse early, but less on perpetrators. We need to kick off a national conversation that gives people the confidence to say to their friends “actually, that’s not ok” when they come across abusive behaviour. We also need to upskill a range of professionals – whether GPs or housing officers- to recognise signs of abusive and controlling behaviour and know what next steps to take. The Welsh government is ahead of England in this respect with published guidance for public servants.

**These changes need to be brought together in a Perpetrator Strategy for England and Wales. Over 80 organisations have signed up to a ‘call to action’, asking the government to publish such a strategy.** This call has also been supported by the DA commissioner, the CPS, the Victims Commissioner for London, the Association of PCCs and the Royal College of GPs.

#### More information about costs of Drive

Research by Bristol University has found that under the status quo, a perpetrator who has been assessed as high risk and whose case is heard at MARAC (a multi agency risk assessment conference for victims), generates costs of £63,000 as a result of his/her DA behaviour. This cost is made up of costs to police, the justice system, health and other public services. The average perpetrator studied was heard at MARAC over three times in a period of around two years. Responding to perpetrators time and time again is very expensive. Drive – which has an operational cost of £1800-£2000 per perpetrator – reduces abuse and the number of times perpetrators are heard at MARAC. The study also found that Drive reduced the other (non-domestic abuse) offending behaviour of perpetrators.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseprevallenceandtrendsendlandandwales/yearendingmarch2019>

### Drive reduces abuse.

The number of Drive service users perpetrating abuse types reduced significantly:

