



Domestic Abuse Commissioner

NICOLE JACOBS

“The focus of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner will be to stand up for victims and survivors, raise public awareness and hold both agencies and government to account in tackling domestic abuse.”

- VICTORIA ATKINS, MINISTER FOR SAFEGUARDING AND VULNERABILITY. 18 SEPTEMBER 2019

Background



Domestic Abuse affected 2.4 million adults in the last year



The police recorded 1.3 million incidents of domestic abuse in the last year



Domestic Abuse cost society £66bn in the year ending March 2017



1 in 5 children live with domestic abuse



There were 380,230 convictions for domestic abuse-related offences in 2019-20

Purpose

The Problem

- The prevalence of domestic abuse remains too high, and the national and local response (while in some areas improving) is inadequate to the scale and complexity of the problem.
- The response represents a “postcode lottery” with significant variation across England and Wales.
- Not only does the specialist domestic abuse support available vary in both quantity and quality, but the wider community response from health, housing, education or social care varies considerably.

The Domestic Abuse Commissioner

- Nicole Jacobs was appointed Designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner in September 2019.
- The Commissioner will play a key role in holding local and national Government to account in order to improve the response to domestic abuse and shining a light on both good and poor practice and policy.
- All statutory agencies and Government Departments will have a legal duty through the Domestic Abuse Bill to cooperate with the Commissioner and respond publicly to any of her recommendations within 56 days.

Priorities of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner

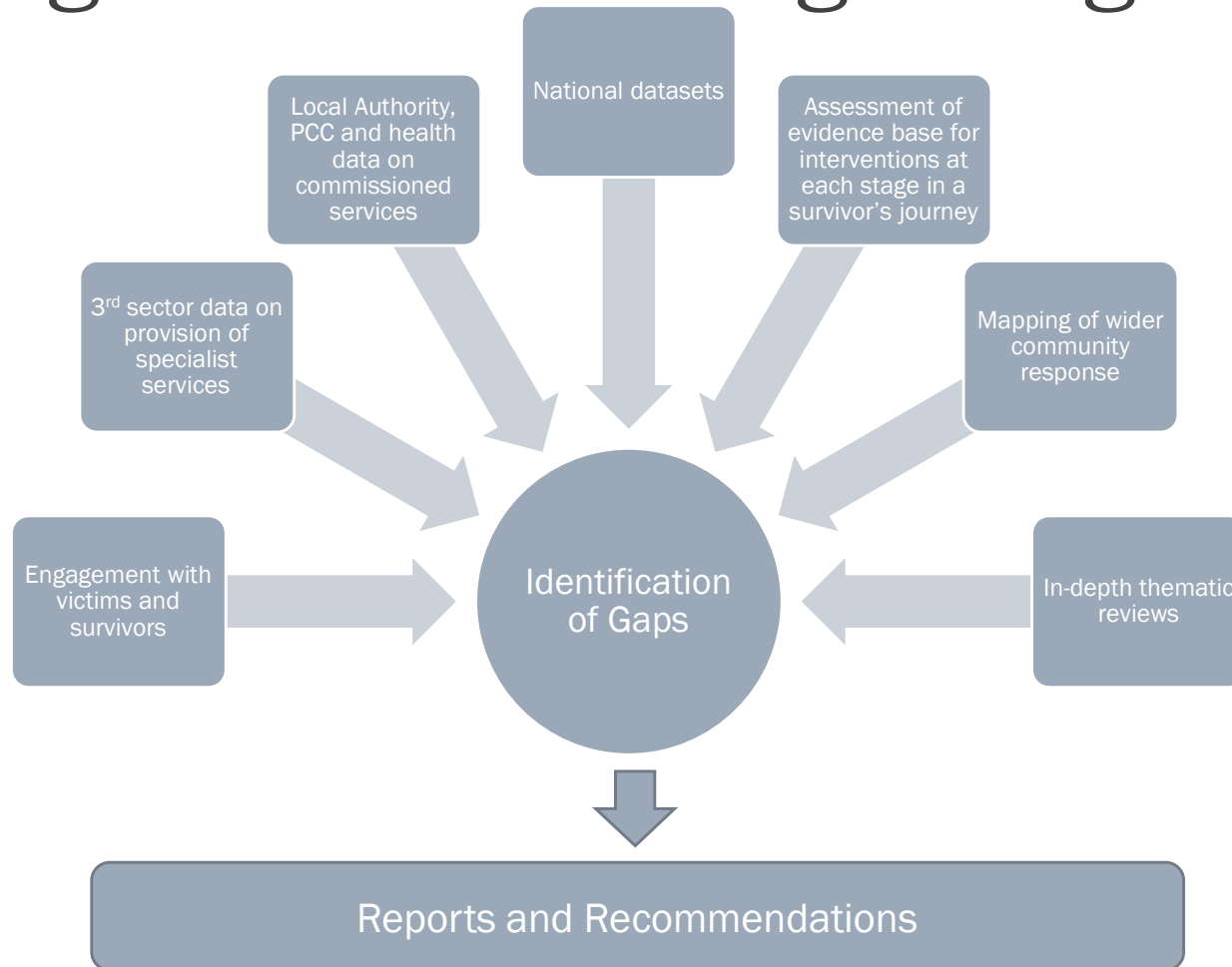
Priorities - Overarching

- To represent and magnify the voices of victims and survivors of domestic abuse.
- To continue to develop a framework for mapping domestic abuse services nationally.
- To conduct mapping for domestic abuse services nationally and to subsequently lay reports before parliament and make recommendations.
- To end the 'postcode lottery' for survivors of domestic abuse.
- To improve the national response to domestic abuse and hold both local and national Government to account

Priorities – Timely

- To monitor the impact of Covid-19 on domestic abuse, and support relevant third sector organizations as they coordinate their response to the crisis.
- To ensure the Domestic Abuse Bill is as robust and inclusive as possible.

Mapping and Monitoring: Long-term



The Domestic Abuse Bill

The Domestic Abuse Bill

- This landmark piece of legislation, first introduced July 2019 and re-introduced in March 2020, has just completed Committee stage in the Commons, where it underwent intense line by line scrutiny.
- Key elements of the Bill are to:
 - Establish the Domestic Abuse Commissioner as a statutory office holder
 - Create a statutory definition of Domestic Abuse to ensure it's properly understood, considered unacceptable and challenged across agencies and in public attitudes
 - Provide for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order
 - Place a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation

The Domestic Abuse Bill (continued)

The Domestic Abuse Bill

- Prohibit perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in the family courts in England and Wales
- Create a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal courts (for example, to enable them to give evidence via a video link)
- Place the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (“Clare’s law”) on a statutory footing

The Commissioner's Priorities for the Domestic Abuse Bill

The Commissioner's Priorities For the Domestic Abuse Bill

- Broadening the statutory duty to include all community based services
- Better support for BAME and migrant women, creating a 'firewall' between the police and immigration enforcement, enabling more migrant victims of domestic abuse to report to the police.
- Introduce the specific offense of non-fatal strangulation – 29% of domestic homicides include strangulation.
- Family Court – we support the findings of the Hidden Harms panel and support further action on this.
- Extend the coercive control offense to include post separation abuse.
- Criminalize threats to share intimate images.