

# NRPF Campaigning Summary

The Domestic Abuse Act of 2021 took important steps in addressing domestic violence. The CSJ welcomed the Act -- while acknowledging that it failed to support sufficiently some of the most vulnerable victims, those without recourse to public funds (NRPF).

In May 2021 we launched an ambitious programme of research and events to reflect this issue. We began a collaboration with small frontline charities and survivors and experts to draw up a strategy to support victims and their children who receive little or no support from the state. This included the drafting of a Private Member's Bill on child marriage for the Rt Hon Sajid Javid in 2021, which passed into legislation in March 2022; and the publication of a report, "Out of the Shadows" (December 2021), which called for a pot of Local Authority funding specifically to support NRPF survivors and their children and for an extension of by and for services, which research shows are best equipped to support survivors from minoritized communities. Both recommendations have been adopted by Nicole Jacobs the Domestic Abuse (DA) Commissioner in her written submission to the Victims' Bill now going through Parliament.

As Secretary of State for Health, Sajid has appointed Olivia Robey, our lead researcher on our DA programme, as his Independent Adviser on Violence Against Women and Children. Olivia, a passionate advocate for survivors with no recourse to public funds, is an invaluable ally to our work. Her new role has informed our programme, to focus in future on the public health aspect of DA.



Photo: A girl plays with a dollhouse at Fegans, a CSJ Alliance charity providing counselling to children and families

## Measures of our success to date

October 2021:

Supported the launch of the new Office for Health Improvement and Disparities within the Department of Health and Social Care with the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Health. Olivia Robey, now the Independent Adviser on Violence against Women and Girls as part of this office, continues to inform our programme.

October 2021:

Nicole Jacobs, DA Commissioner, participated in a CSJ roundtable discussion on No Recourse to Public Funds, organized with the support of Southall Black Sisters.\* This produced a key recommendation, of a Local Authority funding pot for exclusive use of NRPF victims, included in the DA Commission's written evidence for the Victims' Bill going through Parliament.

October 2021:

The Comprehensive Spending Review 2021 included £185 m to support victims over the next three years through the funding of 1000 Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence advisors, as well as key services such as help lines. It also pledged £98m to fund safe accommodation for women survivors and children. Both commitments were among the recommendations made in our 2019 report for the Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Priti Patel, on "DA during Lockdown".

December 2021:

"[Out from the Shadows](#)" report, featured in [this ConservativeHome article](#), highlighted the plight of especially vulnerable domestic abuse victims with No Recourse to Public Funds.

January 2022:

Cristina Odone, Head of the Family Policy Unit, delivered oral testimony to the Treasury Committee on "An Equal Recovery: the impact of the pandemic on women and children" in January 2022. In her subsequent written evidence, Cristina sent the Committee members the "Out from the Shadows" report.

\* Please note: we had agreed with Pragna Patel, then CEO of Southall Black Sisters, to carry out an evaluation of their pilot project for victims with No Recourse to Public Funds. Since Pragna's retirement however we have yet to hear from SBS if this will still go ahead.



## Updated programme for the CSJ's Domestic Abuse work

Domestic Abuse is a heinous crime and it must be punished. Yet 80% of survivors refuse to report their abuse because they fear police and services will belittle them, or not believe them; exploit them or further traumatize them. This is especially true of the thousands who fear their irregular immigration status may lead to detention, deportation, and/or loss of income.

We cannot ignore the toll on the physical and mental health of these victims and their children: identifying them and signposting them to the most accessible support services will prevent a devastating and costly health crisis. Late interventions mean more intensive support from services such as A&E, mental health, youth offending, criminal justice, etc.

In our programme we shall examine the long-term impact of abuse on survivors and children; the potential of transformative therapeutic work with perpetrators; ensuring victims with NRPF can access health services without fear of interrogation about their immigrant status; and pre-trial therapy. We shall also ask stakeholders to describe the best evidence-led interventions to help heal the trauma of DA.

### June 2022:

Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner on Children, attends our round table on children and DA. With one in four children under 18 experiencing domestic abuse in the home, this is the group most affected by this heinous crime. How can we better protect them from this trauma? How can we support their healing? JUNE 2022

### May 2022:

Publication of the second part of our programme, on "DA and Health: a Whole Family Survival Guide"

### July 2022:

Third and final part of our DA programme will focus on the Housing First model: how can survivors and their children, including NRPF, access the best safe spaces in which to rebuild their lives?

Photo: A boy plays with a wooden game at Fegans, a CSJ Alliance charity providing counselling to children and families

## Key Stakeholders

Interviews have been conducted with DA survivors and their children, introduced by Children Heard and Seen, Southall Black Sisters, and For Baby's Sake Foundation.

CSJ Alliance Charities have collaborated through written and oral evidence, including My Cheshire without Abuse, For Baby's Sake Foundation, and Fegans.

### Experts Interviewed:

- Louisa Rolfe, Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police
- Russel Massie, Lead on Children, Thames Valley Police
- Vicky Marsh, CEO of Safety4Sisters
- Anna Smith, CEO of One2Five Bristol
- Rosie Lewis, The Angelou Centre
- Liz Thompson, SafeLives
- Catherine Baxendale, NSPCC
- Imkaan
- Operation Encompass

### Advocacy Engagement:

- Julie Marson MP
- Jess Phillips MP
- Baroness Morrissey
- Baroness Bertin
- Sir Iain Duncan Smith
- Patrick Meyers
- Reducing Parental Conflict (DWP)



# Tackling Domestic Abuse

## Phase One: Influencing Government

In May 2021, the Centre for Social Justice launched an ambitious and urgent two-year programme of research and events to tackle domestic abuse. Collaboration with small, frontline charities, domestic abuse survivors, and experts across the UK, has enabled the CSJ to fight for justice for victims of this heinous crime. The first phase of this programme has brought together leaders in Government, secured much-needed funding, and supported the launch of a new department to tackle health disparities in the UK. None of this would be possible without the generous support of our donors: thanks to you, the CSJ is leading the nation towards Tackling Domestic Abuse.

## Key Highlights

### Designing the National Strategy



The CSJ has been instrumental in the design of the newly announced Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). Two of the CSJ's best and brightest will join the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Health, to launch this critical department and ensure that it is focused on the most disadvantaged in society. Ed Davies, Director of Policy at the CSJ, will be a Senior Advisor, and Olivia Robey,



Research Lead on our Domestic Abuse programme, will be the Independent Advisor on Violence against Women and Girls. We are immensely proud of everything that Ed and Olivia have achieved for the CSJ and know that their positions in Government will be invaluable to achieving the best possible outcomes for victims of domestic abuse in the UK.



**£185M** to support victim services for the next three years, funding over 1,000 Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisors and key services such as crisis helplines.



**£98M** to fund safe accommodation for women and children.



**High-profile leaders** have joined the Health Secretary in voicing their support for our work, including Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner, Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner, and Jess Phillips MP (Lab).



**Key recommendations adopted** from the CSJ's vital Commission saved lives during lockdown.

1. A public awareness campaign encouraged victims of domestic abuse to seek help regardless of government restrictions.
2. Domestic abuse frontline staff were classed as "key workers" so their children could go to school and they were able to work.



**Upcoming Publication:** Out from the Shadows, a powerful and timely report highlighting the plight of especially vulnerable domestic abuse victims with No Recourse to Public Funds will be published in the coming weeks.

## Phase Two: Convincing Government to implement programmes that prevent domestic abuse and support victims.

The CSJ is excited for the next phase of the Tackling Domestic Abuse Project, to be launched with an op-ed from a high-profile survivor. In this phase, we will host a series of events, publish our vital report, and press for Government to implement programmes that tackle domestic abuse.

We aim to design an implementable package of family support based on the most impactful programmes identified in this research, and ensure it is nationally available.

We aim to convince Government to train school staff to be trauma informed and link the police service with schools. A trauma-informed school that is aware of a pupil's experience with domestic abuse can provide additional care and transform his or her life outcomes.

We will pilot an innovative buddy system for survivors of domestic abuse, connecting those with shared experience to foster peer to peer learning and support. We are in discussion with Bristol Council to pilot this programme.

**Photograph:** Domestic abuse begins during pregnancy in 30% of cases ([For Baby's Sake Trust](#), a CSJ Alliance Charity)