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All Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence

8 March 2018

**TRANSFORMING THE RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC ABUSE: LAUNCH OF
CONSULTATION**

Dear Chair

We are writing to you jointly to formally announce the launch of the Government's consultation on transforming the response to domestic abuse.

We are extremely grateful for the expertise and advice that the All Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence (APPG) provides the Government. The oversight and expert knowledge the APPG provides has contributed to the development of this consultation.

As you know, last year the Prime Minister announced a new programme of work leading towards a draft Domestic Abuse Bill to transform how we think about and tackle domestic abuse. That commitment was affirmed in the Queen's Speech, which outlined proposals to bring forward a draft Bill this session to:

- Enshrine a definition of domestic abuse in law;
- Introduce a new protective notice and order which combines the strongest elements of the existing regime;
- Recognise the harm domestic abuse inflicts on a child;
- Create a Domestic Abuse Commissioner in law;
- Demonstrate our commitment to ratifying the Istanbul Convention by extending extraterritorial jurisdiction over Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) related offences.

The consultation will last 12 weeks. It aims to harness the knowledge and expertise of victims and survivors, charities, specialist organisations, experts and professionals across policing, criminal justice, health, welfare, education, social services, employment and local authorities who deal with these issues every day. It covers the breadth of issues that have been examined by the APPG, and so will be of great interest to you.

Structured under four objectives, with prevention as a golden thread running across all of them, the consultation asks questions on the following:

- **Promote awareness** – Proposals to help put domestic abuse at the top of everyone's agenda, and raise public and professionals' awareness
- **Protect and support** – Proposals to enhance the safety of victims and the support that they receive.
- **Pursue and deter** – Proposals to ensure an effective response to perpetrator from initial police response through to conviction and management of offenders including rehabilitation.
- **Improve Performance** – Proposals to drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse across all local areas and agencies/sectors.

The full consultation is available on

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/homeoffice-moj/domestic-abuse-consultation>

and at www.Gov.uk. There is also a shortened, more accessible version available at

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/homeoffice-moj/domestic-abuse-consultation-short-version>

The consultation will close on 31 May 2018 and will be followed by a formal Government response in the autumn.

We would be very grateful if you could share the consultation with colleagues, partners and others in your network who have an interest in this area so we reach as many people as possible. This is your opportunity to highlight issues you see as critical to the success of the Bill and to the wider non-legislative programme.

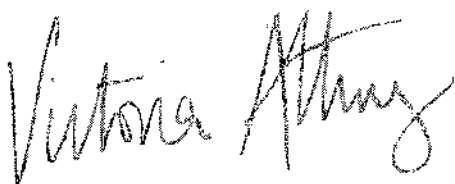
We will be holding a range of events across England and Wales to raise awareness of the consultation. Please do let us know if you would like to attend one of these. We would be happy to share initial findings from the consultation with the APPG at a meeting over the summer and are committed to engaging with you throughout the consultation period.

Simultaneously, we will be working closely with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on his Department's parallel audit of local authority commissioned domestic abuse services to ensure we deliver on our commitment of sustainable and secure future funding of refuges. We will continue to closely engage with sector partners on short-term supported accommodation proposals. We want to make sure that we deliver on our commitment that victims get the right support at the right time and no victim is turned away from the support they need.

We are determined to use this opportunity to build momentum and drive further reform in a way that will make a real and lasting difference to victims and survivors and their children. It is incredibly important that we get this right and to do this we need genuine cross-party support and consensus. We hope that you will work with us and help transform our response to domestic abuse.

We are copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Victoria Atkins'.

VICTORIA ATKINS MP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr Phillip Lee'.

DR PHILLIP LEE MP