# **General Election 2024** A whole-system response to domestic abuse

The facts are stark.

* **Three women a fortnight are killed by a partner or ex-partner.[[1]](#footnote-2)**
* **Nearly one in five crimes recorded by the police are domestic abuse related.[[2]](#footnote-3)**
* **The economic and social costs of domestic abuse in England were just under £78 billion in 2022.[[3]](#footnote-4)**

Women’s Aid’s manifesto for the 2024 General Election calls for the national prioritisation of domestic abuse and other forms of VAWG, and for political parties to pledge their commitment to our three key pillars.

## Women's Aid Patron, Melanie Brown MBE

“Domestic abuse isn't like other issues as so many affected just can't safely speak out and tell you, but it is everywhere and I'm telling you today lives are at risk, and women in particular need you. No matter which political party you are in, I'm asking you for your commitment today that domestic abuse is an issue you will prioritise."

**A whole-system response must be a priority for all political parties.** We need to see a seismic shift towards a whole-system approach that can better understand and address the needs of survivors, as well as recognise the value – to survivors and society - that specialist[[4]](#footnote-5) women's and ‘by and for’ domestic abuse services deliver.

## The pillars for change

1. **INVEST to save**: fund specialist women’s services to save lives and money

Investment in specialist women's and ‘by and for’ domestic abuse services could not only help the next government to save £3,898,100,000[[5]](#footnote-6) by reducing duplication of effort and pressure on public services, but it will also save lives.

1. **SUPPORT survivors**: deliver the right response the first time

Even before the start of a survivor’s journey to safety, survivors need to know that no matter where they turn, they will be supported and protected – whether that be, for example, with their mental health, supporting their children’s wellbeing, accessing emergency funds, or securing housing.

1. **PREVENT abuse**: transform societal attitudes and understanding

Attitudes which enable and excuse domestic abuse to continue are still worryingly prevalent in the United Kingdom[[6]](#footnote-7). To end domestic abuse, it is vital that we raise awareness and improve understanding of the causes, and to change attitudes to ensure we achieve a world where domestic abuse is no longer tolerated.   
  
We are clear that the following foundations must underpin these pillars:

* **A gendered approach** – recognising that while anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, it is disproportionately committed by men against women9 and is a form of VAWG.
* **Women’s rights are human rights** – a rights-based approach, which protects and supports all women, including those facing additional forms of inequality.
* **A whole-system response** – recognising that all government departments and the public sector – including health, social care, criminal and family justice, education, housing - need to play their part in ending domestic abuse.
* **Government accountability** – including through the creation a dedicated ministerial lead for VAWG who attends Cabinet to drive forward action and hold all government departments, statutory agencies and local commissioners accountable for progress.

For more information please see Women’s Aid’s General Election Manifesto, or contact Sophie Francis-Cansfield, Public Affairs Manager, at [**s.francis-cansfield@womensaid.org.uk**](mailto:s.francis-cansfield@womensaid.org.uk)**.**

1. Office for National Statistics (ONS). (2022) Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics, England

   and Wales: year ending March 2022. [Published online.](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabusevictimcharacteristicsenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2022%22%20/t%20%22_blank) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Office for National Statistics (ONS). (2022) Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2022. [Published online.](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesoverview/november2022) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Women’s Aid. (2023) [Investing to save: the economic case for funding specialist domestic abuse support.](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Respublica_web.pdf) Bristol: Women’s Aid. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. These services are specifically designed to support women, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse and other forms of VAWG, are delivered by trained and expert staff, and have a track record in meeting survivors' needs within their local communities'. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Women’s Aid. (2023) Investing to save: the economic case for funding specialist domestic abuse support. Bristol: Women’s Aid. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Women’s Aid. (2022). Come Together to End Domestic Abuse: a survey of UK attitudes to domestic abuse 2022. Bristol: Women’s Aid [↑](#footnote-ref-7)