



# Ministry of Defence

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
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**THE RT HON TOBIAS ELLWOOD MP**  
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE AND MINISTER  
FOR DEFENCE PEOPLE AND VETERANS

D/Min(DPV)/TE PQW/17/-19/2019/03739

11 June 2019

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your Parliamentary Questions 236392, 236393, 236394, 236395 and 236396 of 26 March 2019 that asked about the way the Armed Forces address domestic abuse incidents. You will recall that I responded on 1 April 2019 to advise you that it would take time to gather the information requested. I am now able to provide a substantive response. I apologise for the length of time it has taken.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has a tri-Service Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy, JSP 913, which is under review. In 2018 we published a whole-force Domestic Abuse Strategy '*No Defence for Abuse*' in 2018<sup>1</sup>. The Strategy promises to "create and maintain an environment that does not tolerate domestic abuse and raises awareness of domestic abuse and related policies as well as the sources of help available to those experiencing, or exposed to, domestic abuse within the Defence community."

The MOD Domestic Abuse Working Group (DAWG) monitors trends and evidence that supports the prioritisation of activity in support of the Strategy. This is achieved through regular communication with the Chain of Command and other key stakeholders such as the Families Federations. The Army has its own DAWG which reports to the MOD DAWG. In delivering the Strategy the DAWG also pays close attention to the latest research in the field. The findings of key reviews such as the Service Justice Review and domestic homicide reviews are reflected in the DAWG Action Plan.

Delivering the Strategy requires a multi-organisational approach and close working with external stakeholders from various sectors. The MOD is also a member of the Employers Initiative to End Domestic Abuse (EIDA), a forum to share views and best

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/725400/Domestic\\_Abuse\\_MOD\\_booklet\\_Digital.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/725400/Domestic_Abuse_MOD_booklet_Digital.pdf)

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practice across the public and private sector. The Department plays an active role in supporting delivery of the Government's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and development of the Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill. This includes input to the MHCLG accommodation review for domestic abuse victims. The MHCLG review will provide guidance to local authorities for the proposed model for delivery of support to victims and their children in accommodation-based domestic abuse services.

The Services also engage with the Mankind Initiative which delivers workshops on providing support to male victims of domestic abuse.

In Portsmouth, the Covenant-funded Aurora New Dawn programme provides a national tri-service advocacy service to victims of domestic abuse.

All three Services abide by the following Joint Service Publications (JSP)

JSP 913: Tri-Service policy on domestic abuse and sexual violence.

JSP 770: Tri-Service Operational and non-Operational welfare policy.

JSP 834: Safeguarding children and young people.

Each Service has different ways of reporting and recording Domestic Abuse incidents:

### **Royal Navy**

For any incident attended by Royal Navy Police (RNP) where there is an indication of domestic abuse, coercive or controlling behaviour, stalking or harassment, a Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment (DASH) risk assessment is carried out and is automatically shared with the local Multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) or Public Protection Unit (PPU). If required, the perpetrator will be arrested. In the most serious cases it will be referred to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). The MARAC will be attended by a range of agencies including police, probation, child protection, substance misuse, and mental health.

On the Welfare side, Royal Navy Royal Marines Welfare does not monitor domestic abuse incidents but takes referrals from a variety of sources (the individual, Divisional Officer, support charities, GP) and categorises those cases as domestic abuse victim, domestic abuse perpetrator. Very often the primary referral source is not disclosed. For example, an individual could be referred to the Welfare due to financial concerns, but a holistic assessment of the case may identify that domestic abuse is an issue and suitable support is required by adults and children within the family unit.

Stop Domestic Abuse and Portsmouth City Council train Royal Navy Royal Marines Welfare staff on the Up2U Healthy Relationships programme. A therapeutic behaviour change intervention for domestic abuse perpetrators that also provides delivery of 'mirror' sessions for partners.

Personnel also sit on various domestic abuse fora nationally to ensure the needs of Royal Navy personnel and families are considered.

Domestic abuse cases are reported to the RN Service Police and onto SO3 Police Ops for recording on the database in accordance with Royal Navy Police policy. Units are to accurately record all known incidents on the Joint Personnel Administration system which are then referred to the Summary Hearing Review Cell.

## **Army**

The Army's welfare policy AGAI 81, refers to JSP 913 and includes guidance on how to deal with domestic abuse at Paras 81.191 – 81.197 which outline when and to whom instances of domestic abuse must be reported (Police, Army Welfare Services, social services, Local Authority's etc).

The Policy articulates the processes for the sharing of information between the Chain of Command (CoC), Army Welfare Service and police and the responsibility of the CoC Unit Welfare Officer lead in terms of practical assistance to victims of domestic abuse. This responsibility includes informing the Home Office Police (or Service Police) if an offence is suspected and the statutory Social Care Authority for the area for any incidents in a household that includes children (even if only visiting occasionally) or any adult with vulnerabilities.

Unit Welfare Officers are instructed that Home Office Police have primacy over domestic abuse incidents that occur in the UK and the presumption is that they will deal with criminal offences arising in a domestic abuse case. The policy encourages the reporting of domestic abuse to the police to inform appropriate safety planning and consideration for bringing the perpetrator to account. (Bearing in mind that in many cases there will be a duty to make the Service Police aware).

It is a requirement to provide a confidential means of seeking help and signposting to information about internal and external organisations that can help. Where appropriate, time off from work to obtain medical, counselling or legal assistance is permitted and occasionally, workplace relocation. The victim is provided with access to information and help in developing a safety plan.

The Army has its own Domestic Abuse Working Group which sits quarterly. The group monitors delivery of initiatives including:

- The expansion of the Army Welfare Service's provision of perpetrator programme to support domestic abuse perpetrators in changing their behaviours.
- The Libor-funded Safe & Together roll-out across Defence, with Army Welfare Service as facilitator.
- The Information Sharing protocol between Army Welfare Service and Provost Marshal (Army), which permits enhanced information flow between Service Police and Army Welfare Service.
- Briefings provided to Local Authorities and Private Sector on Defence approach to tackling Domestic Abuse.
- Engagement initiated with Service LGBT Networks to understand whether services should be developed to support domestic abuse within this community.

The Army maintains important links with North East Hampshire domestic abuse projects and the Chair of North East Hampshire domestic abuse Forum (who attends Army DAWG). Working closely with the charity Hestia on the provision of domestic abuse Ambassadors Programme, training is provided to volunteers who are willing to become domestic ambassadors in their units.

### **Royal Air Force**

The RAF has a contract with SSAFA, to provide Personal Support and Social Work Services (Non-Statutory). Part of the charity's role is to work with both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse to ensure all parties are supported and appropriate interventions take place. SSAFA currently follows a one-to-one model of intervention and support known as MIDAS (Managed Intervention Domestic Abuse Service) which works toward changing behaviours of perpetrators and supporting victims. SSAFA is currently undertaking a review of the most appropriate model for implementation in the RAF ahead of providing further training for RAF-contracted SSAFA staffs.

Monthly statistical returns covering all RAF Units are provided through the contract with SSAFA. This informs Air of the number of referrals that are because of domestic abuse. The RAF Domestic Abuse Steering Group reviews the statistics and considers any necessary responses in light of this information.

The Air Forces main charities, the RAF Benevolent Fund and the Royal Air Forces Association offer a variety of support to our personnel, including for financial hardship; emotional well-being and with family relationships. The Benevolent Fund is also

developing a digital assistance that will signpost victims and perpetrators to bespoke support available through SSAFA and other agencies.

Each RAF unit has a Station Welfare Casework Committee which has mandated attendance by our contracted SSAFA workers. Where necessary, RAF Police may also attend specific cases and if this was because of a domestic abuse case, information could be shared to ensure the correct support mechanisms could be put in place for both victims and perpetrators. This may also result in Safeguarding measures being implemented (especially where children are involved).

I hope this lengthy response reassures you that the Ministry of Defence takes the responsibility to tackle the issue of domestic abuse in the Armed Forces very seriously.

A copy of this letter has been placed in the Library of the House.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, sweeping oval shape above a series of loops and a final circular flourish.

**THE RT HON TOBIAS ELLWOOD MP**