



Sent by email:

Baroness Lister of Burtersett

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24 March 2021

Dear Ruth,

Domestic Abuse Bill

I am writing to follow up the debate on your amendment 91 at Report stage of the Bill on 17 March, which related to ensuring reference to the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy within the statutory guidance.

As you know, the Government intends to publish both a refreshed VAWG strategy and a Domestic Abuse strategy this year. Domestic abuse – a form of violence against women and girls, rooted in gender inequality - is the highest harm crime on the Home Office Crime Index with 2.3m victims every year. In producing two strategies, we intend to shine twice as much light on the issue of violence against women and girls and the strategies will work together to drive down all VAWG crimes. As I indicated in the debate, this approach in no way intends to de-gender domestic abuse; nor does it seek to separate domestic abuse from the wider framework of violence against women and girls. The two strategies will share much of the same evidence and structure and will be complemented by a single, joint National Statement of Expectations.

I am pleased to confirm that the Government will reference to the upcoming VAWG and DA strategies within the statutory guidance. We have included reference to the strategies within Chapter 1 – ‘Objectives’ – as well as Chapter 4, ‘Working Together’. We have also committed to updating the guidance with further detail on the strategies following their publication.

The Government intends to publish the statutory guidance for consultation shortly after Royal Assent. I would welcome any further feedback you or other peers may have on the wording of this reference during the consultation process. My officials would also be happy to engage with you if helpful.

I am copying this letter to Baroness Hodgson of Abinger, the Bishop of Gloucester, Baroness Fox of Buckley, Lord Paddick and Baroness Wilcox of Newport. I am also placing a copy of this letter in the House of Lords Library.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S'.

Baroness Williams of Trafford