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Dominic Raab MP
House of Commons
London
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16 April 2020

Dear Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP

Victims of domestic abuse are currently even more vulnerable than usual during the lockdown measures taken to combat the spread of Covid-19.

In an effort to support those affected, we are a cross party group of politicians writing to ask you to release emergency funds to local authorities, for the purpose of providing safe places to stay for victims of domestic abuse.

Furthermore, the Westminster Government should also release emergency funding directly to devolved administrations so that they too may take appropriate action in their respective nations.

As you will know, the conditions of lockdown have resulted in a spike in domestic abuse, not just here in the UK but around the world. As such, we welcomed the Home Secretary's reassurances on the 29th March that victims of domestic abuse are permitted to leave their homes to seek safety.

However, many women and girls who are victims of this crime have nowhere to go. This was acknowledged in a letter written to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government dated 31st March, and signed by a wide range of women's charities and organisations.

One of the suggestions made in the letter is that the Government should release emergency funds to local authorities for the purpose of providing safe housing for victims of domestic abuse, in a manner similar to the measures put forward to eradicate homelessness. We support this call, and urge you to act on this recommendation.

Since this letter was published just over a week ago, further evidence has come to light that the situation for victims of domestic abuse appears to be worsening.

We now know that there has been a 25% rise in calls to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, while an audit of over 100 relevant organisations found that over three quarters have had to reduce

service delivery to victims, owing to a surge in case work. At least eight women have become victims of domestic killings since the lockdown was announced.

With vital services which provide a lifeline to so many women threatening to become overwhelmed, it is time for the Government to act. Please release emergency funding to give victims of domestic abuse a safe place to live.

Yours sincerely,

Amelia Womack, deputy leader, Green Party of England and Wales

Clare Bailey MLA, leader, Green Party in Northern Ireland

Christine Jardine MP, spokesperson for Home Office and Women and Equalities, Liberal Democrats

Naomi Long MLA, leader, Alliance Party of Northern Ireland

Anne McLaughlin MP, Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities for the SNP in Westminster

Leanne Wood AM, Shadow Minister for Justice and Equalities, Plaid Cymru