

## Minutes of the APPG on Domestic Violence and Abuse Meeting

### *Strengthening Support for Victims and Survivors*

9-10am, Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Room R, Portcullis House

**Chair:** Jess Phillips MP

It is estimated that around one in five victims of domestic abuse in the UK have to take time off work because of the abuse<sup>1</sup> and survivors face significant difficulty in navigating employment policies and retaining their job at what is an incredibly traumatic time. Perpetrators often sabotage women's employment, but the long term physical and psychological impacts of domestic abuse present severe barriers to maintaining work. Women who escape to refuge also may need to give up their job so that the abuser cannot find them. The Philippines, a number of states in the United States and, most recently, New Zealand have all passed laws requiring employers to provide paid leave to victims of domestic abuse.

This private meeting between the Minister for Domestic and Sexual Violence in New Zealand, Jan Logie, and the APPG for Domestic Violence and Abuse in the UK hoped to enable lessons to be shared and learned between the two jurisdictions. This initial discussion aimed to understand the steps required to implement similar protection for victims in the UK, the barriers and opposition to delivering this change, and how the proposed new domestic abuse bill can be used as a vehicle for change.

The meeting was chaired by Jess Phillips MP. The Parliamentarians and other attendees present were:

- Alex Norris MP
- Philippa Whitford MP
- Baroness Helic
- Baroness Newlove, Victim's Commissioner
- Katie Ghose, Women's Aid
- Elizabeth Filkin, Employer's Initiative on Domestic Abuse
- Kathryn Royal, Surviving Economic Abuse
- Pamela Zaballa, Everyone's Business
- Jane Clutterbuck, Hogan Lovells
- Oliver Spratt, Hogan Lovells
- Sara Reis, Women's Budget Group
- Rachel Hersey, Victim's Commissioner's Office
- Sian Hawkins, Women's Aid

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<sup>1</sup> Trades Union Congress, Domestic Violence in the Workplace: A TUC Survey Report, August 2014.

- Irena Hulova, Office of Alex Norris MP

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## Jess Phillips MP

Jess welcomed everyone to the meeting, and added a special thanks to Minister Jan Logie for joining us via Skype from New Zealand. Jess highlighted that in July 2018 New Zealand passed a legislation that grants victims of domestic violence ten days paid leave to allow them to leave their partners, find new homes and protect themselves and their children. She indicated that there are important details in this legislation, which the Minister will set out, that make this legislation a clear case study for the UK to learn from.

## Jan Logie - Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of Justice (Domestic and Sexual Violence Issues)

### NZ Domestic Violence Victims' Protection Act 2018

- Expands flexible working arrangements to cover short-term arrangements for people affected by domestic violence.
- Includes adverse treatment, on the grounds of being a person affected by domestic violence, as a basis for a personal grievance.
- Provides 10 days' domestic violence leave per year.
- Amends the Human Rights Act to cover discrimination on the grounds of being a person affected, or believed to be affected, by domestic violence.
- Comes into force 1 April 2019..
- <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2018/0021/17.0/whole.html#contents>

### Flexible working arrangements

- People affected by domestic violence have the statutory right to request a short-term (2 months or less) variation of their working arrangements to deal with the effects of domestic violence.
- These arrangements may be extended.
- Variation may cover hours and days of work, location of workplace, duties at work, contact details provided to the employer, or other arrangements.
- Employers must respond to requests as soon as possible but no later than 10 days after the request is made.
- Employers may request proof of domestic violence but it is not required.

### Domestic violence leave

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### Supporting research

#### **New Zealand**

- Kahui, Sherilee; Ku, Bryan; Snively, Suzanne: Productivity Gains from Workplace Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence, 2014 (pdf)
- Kahui, Sherilee; Snively, Suzanne: Measuring the Economic Costs of Child Abuse and Intimate Partner Violence to New Zealand, 2014 (pdf)
- Snively, Suzanne: The New Zealand Economic Cost of Family Violence, 1995 (doc)

#### **Australia**

- Stanford, Jim: Economic Benefits of Paid Domestic Violence Leave, 2016 (pdf)
- Report of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, Victoria, 2016 (pdfs)

### **Other areas of discussion**

- Other support needed for survivors of domestic abuse.
- The need to challenge the current culture that exists, and make domestic abuse everyone's business.
- Ensure issues around data management and privacy are looked at in more detail.
- Protecting workers as well as employees.
- The need to raise awareness about stay at home mums and wives.
- What employers should do about perpetrators.
- What happens when employers don't provide survivors with the requested leave.

### **Next steps**

- Potential to table a 10 Minute Rule Bill, to introduce this to Parliament and to set out the necessary detail.
- Table an amendment if the government don't include this issue within the domestic abuse bill.
- Include a big business, such as Lloyds Bank, to support this campaign.
- Parliamentarians to re-convene on this issue.