

## **The 8th annual domestic violence symposium: engaging with the government's renewed strategy to end domestic violence and abuse**

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### **Abstract**

Last year, an estimated 2.1 million people experienced some form of domestic abuse in the UK, with 1.4 million female and approximately 700,000 male victims. Every month seven women are killed by former or current partners in England and Wales, whilst a quarter of 13-18 girls report experiencing physical abuse in their own intimate partner relationships.

The last coalition government implemented a number of statutory measures aimed at tackling domestic violence and emboldening individuals to report instances of abuse. Major changes included the national roll-out of Domestic Violence Protection Orders and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme whilst the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 additionally criminalised forced marriage and stalking in England and Wales. Such legislative changes have contributed towards a record number of total prosecutions for crimes related with domestic violence and abuse, with the Crown Prosecution Service reporting 107,104 prosecutions in 2014/15 alone, a rise of 16,000 (18.3%) on the previous year.

However, with domestic abuse continuing to cost the UK economy £15.8bn a year, and with victims often needing to speak to 5 professionals before receiving appropriate support, it is clear that sustained improvement in tackling the attitudes which underpin domestic violence, whilst safeguarding victims of abuse, is desperately required. As contended in the Government's recently published 'Ending Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy 2016-2020', (accompanied by an £80m service transformation fund), "we cannot simply arrest our way out of domestic and sexual violence", with a radical shift from crisis response towards early intervention and prevention urgently needed.

The 8th Annual Domestic Violence Symposium will provide all relevant stakeholders with a timely opportunity to engage with the Government's renewed strategy and contribute towards the continued development of a coordinated approach aimed at preventing domestic abuse, improving the response of the criminal justice system, and challenging the attitudes which reinforce its perpetration.