

News story

VAWG strategy to better protect children from misogyny and abuse

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) strategy will focus on healthy relationships and consent, and tackle relationship abuse through a new helpline.

From: [Home Office \(/government/organisations/home-office\)](#), [Department for Education \(/government/organisations/department-for-education\)](#), [Jess Phillips MP \(/government/people/jess-phillips\)](#), [Alex Davies-Jones MP \(/government/people/alex-davies-jones\)](#), [The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP \(/government/people/keir-starmer\)](#) and [The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP \(/government/people/bridget-phillipson\)](#)

Published 18 December 2025

Last updated 19 December 2025 —



Photo: Getty Images

The next generation of girls will be better protected from violence and young boys steered away from harmful misogynistic influences, under sweeping new measures announced by the Prime Minister.

The plans unveiled today will focus on prevention and tackling the root causes of abuse, and come as the latest stats show that nearly 40% of teenagers in

relationships are a victim of relationship abuse and over 40% of young men hold a positive view of Andrew Tate.

Under the £20 million package, teachers and families will be empowered to address these harmful attitudes and behaviours head on, with young people taught to identify positive role models and challenge unhealthy myths about women and relationships.

This is just one part of the government's [strategy to tackle violence against women and girls](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/freedom-from-violence-and-abuse-a-cross-government-strategy) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/freedom-from-violence-and-abuse-a-cross-government-strategy>), deploying the full power of the state in the largest crackdown on violence against women and girls in British history.

Teachers will get specialist training on how to talk to pupils about issues like consent and the dangers of sharing intimate images, with experts brought in to pilot new approaches. This will be backed by pioneering research identifying the most effective way of teaching young people these crucial lessons.

Building on changes already announced to arm children against disinformation, fake news and conspiracy theories on social media, all secondary schools in England will be required to have a strong offer to educate students about healthy and respectful relationships, with every child getting access to this by the end of this Parliament.

Tackling the most worrying attitudes as early as possible, schools will also send high-risk individuals to get the extra care and support they need, focused on challenging deep-rooted misogynist influences. We will move quickly to deliver what works – a specific pot of money will be used to look specifically at how to prevent the most harmful sexual behaviours. A new helpline will be launched to help young people concerned about their behaviours to get the help they need.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said:

“Every parent should be able to trust that their daughter is safe at school, online and in her relationships. But too often toxic ideas are taking hold early and going unchallenged. This government is stepping in sooner – backing teachers, calling out misogyny, and intervening when warning signs appear – to stop harm before it starts.

“This is about protecting girls and driving forward education and conversation with boys and young men, which is a responsibility we owe to the next generation, and one this government will deliver.”

Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson said:

“Having spent years working in a refuge for women experiencing domestic abuse, I know just how much early intervention could have changed lives. We cannot simply respond to harm after it happens; we must give young people the understanding and tools they need before attitudes harden into harm.

“Investing in our teachers and ensuring they can respond to the realities children face today is so vital to renewing our communities, and protecting young women.”

Relationship abuse among teenagers will also be challenged head on, following a number of devastating cases where young girls' lives have been cut short at the hand of an ex-boyfriend.

Police and social services will also be given the tools they need to intervene in these harmful relationships with new guidance on teenage relationships, while the legal framework for domestic abuse will be reviewed so it properly represents adolescents' experiences.

This will come ahead of a major piece of research looking at how police, schools and social care approach teenage relationship abuse, and what needs to change.

As well as within intimate relationships, children actively displaying harmful behaviours towards siblings, parents or caregivers will be enrolled in behaviour change programmes.

Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls Jess Phillips said:

“For too long the scale of violence against women and girls has been treated as a fact of life in our country.

“I am determined our groundbreaking strategy will prevent women and girls from actually being harmed in the first place.

“But a strategy is just words. And we know words are not enough. What matters is action.

“Put together, from today, we will deploy the full power of the state to introduce the largest crackdown to stop violence perpetrated against women and girls in British history.”

Over the last year alone, 1 in every 8 women was a victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking. For the first time, this government has declared violence against women and girls a national emergency, with a pledge to halve it in a decade.

Victims and Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Minister Alex Davies-Jones said:

“As someone who has heard far too many heartbreaking stories from victims, I know how pressing change is.

“This historic strategy is about stopping harm before it starts, brought by a government which is finally standing on the side of every victim in our country.

“This strategy is not just policy; it's hope for a brighter future.”

Nour Norris OBE, lead campaigner, aunt and sister of Raneem Oudeh and Khaola Saleem, said:

“I welcome this VAWG strategy and fully support the government's recognition of the scale and complexity of the problem. It is the first time we have seen a government bring together all these critical areas of failure and act on them within

such a short period. That acknowledgment matters, and so does the willingness to reform.

“For my family, these reforms are not abstract. Khaola and Raneem did not only face a failing 999 control room; they experienced almost every gap outlined in this strategy.

“Raneem lived for years with a perpetrator who was able to exploit weaknesses across policing, risk assessment, information sharing, and enforcement. My campaign has always been about closing those gaps so no woman is left unprotected, unheard, or unbelieved.

“What gives this strategy its strength is not any single measure, but the fact that it finally brings these reforms together in one coherent approach. Protection, early intervention, accountability, and intelligence-led policing must operate as one system if we are serious about saving lives.

“My hope is that these commitments, delivered with urgency and consistency, will create the change that so many families have been fighting for and ensure that no woman or girl endures what Raneem and my sister endured.”

Nick Gazzard, father of Hollie Gazzard and founder of the Hollie Gazzard Trust, said:

“It’s almost 12 years since we lost our beloved Hollie at the hands of her abusive ex-partner. We live with the most devastating consequences of violence against women and girls every single day... it does not get any easier.

“After losing Hollie, we wanted to make sure her life was not in vain. She was too good for that. We set out to make sure lessons were learned and we have done as much as we can to make sure no other families go through what we deal with on a daily basis. To know that Hollie’s experience has informed the government’s new violence against women and girls strategy means a great deal to us as a family and me as Hollie’s dad.

“This strategy is the start of the government’s quest to halve VAWG over the next 10 years and there is much work to do. We welcome action on the areas Hollie Gazzard Trust has campaigned for, including improvements to risk assessment in stalking and domestic abuse cases, new guidance on effective multi-agency working, better co-ordinated perpetrator management, statutory guidance on stalking and promotion of independent stalking victim advocates. We also welcome confirmation the strategy builds on Hollie Gazzard Trust’s drive to improve workplace responses to domestic abuse.

“Spurred on by the strategy, Hollie Gazzard Trust will continue working to prevent harm to women and girls. We will expand our healthy relationships in school sessions further to help younger children, primary schools and parents navigate pressures of online and in the real world. We’ll advocate for women like Hollie who want to end abusive relationships and need support to stay safe. We will continue to work with police forces and support services across the country providing our safety app Hollie Guard Extra to those at highest risk.

“We ask everyone who is concerned about the safety of women and girls to join us. VAWG is a national epidemic everyone has a part to play in stopping it.

“Finally – today is a day to remember Hollie and all the other women whose lives have been taken by male violence. We owe it to all our daughters to make sure things finally change.

“Find out more about our work and how you can support us to achieve the aim of halving VAWG in 10 years at www.holliegazzard.org (<https://www.holliegazzard.org/>).”

Clive and Sue Ruggles, parents of Alice Ruggles, said:

“We are delighted that tackling stalking and promoting healthy relationships has been recognised as an essential part of the government’s strategy to halve VAWG in a decade.

“We are pleased to see a range of proposals and measures to improve the criminal justice response in stalking cases. This is something we have campaigned for ever since losing [our daughter] Alice 9 years ago.

“It has always been clear to us that the only way to make this sustainable is to focus on the longer term, and to address the root causes. We need to change the mindset of today’s young people. That is why the main focus of the trust that we set up in Alice’s name is to work in schools aiming to tackle unwanted and unacceptable behaviours before they escalate. It is encouraging that the new strategy recognises the crucial importance of such work.

“This strategy represents a huge step forward. It gives us real hope for a future in which victims are better protected and there are far fewer of them.

“We look forward to government, criminal justice, and victim services working together with teachers and educators to bring about real and sustainable change.”

Farah Naz, aunt of Zara Aleena, said:

“This strategy is comprehensive, and I welcome the recognition that tackling violence against women and girls requires action across prevention, offender management, and wider culture change. For this work to endure, it matters to me that it continues on a genuinely cross-party basis and in partnership with public services and the wider public.

“I also recognise the importance of victim-campaigners being visible within this work. It is often because of their persistence that gaps are named and change becomes possible.

“My niece, Zara Aleena, was murdered while walking home – not through chance, but following systemic failures that were known and preventable. Our tragedy, among countless others, illustrates why a national, coordinated approach to prevention and accountability is essential. If this kind of strategy had existed and been embedded earlier, Zara may still be alive. That is why implementation and longevity matter so deeply.”

Yasmin Javed, mother of Fawziyah Javed, said:

“I welcome the VAWG strategy and the recognition that women’s safety must be a national priority. Sharing Fawziyah’s story is not easy. It’s a painful reminder why it’s important to share to bring about positive change.

“Fawziyah was a woman who deserved safety, dignity and to be heard. Fawziyah’s story shows the devastating consequences when warning signs are missed and women are not protected. No woman should be failed by the systems that are meant to protect her.

“I hope this strategy makes a genuine commitment to listen to women, acting earlier and ensuring accountability, so that no other family has to experience such a devastating loss.

“Fawziyah’s story is shared in the hope that it contributes to positive change and greater understanding. It can bring positive progress and help strengthen efforts to ensure women receive the care, understanding and protection they deserve.

“I hope the VAWG strategy leads to real lasting change, so that women at risk are believed, protected and supported before it’s too late.”

Published 18 December 2025

Last updated 19 December 2025 [+ show all updates](#)



OGL

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated

© Crown copyright