



**News Release**

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## **NEW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAW WILL HELP ABUSE VICTIMS**

Proposals for a new crime of domestic violence will help hundreds of Warrington people suffering in abusive relationships, says a local family law expert.

Jennifer Roulston, who is a partner at FDR Law, based in Stockton Heath, welcomes the Government's plans to create a new law which will empower the police to intervene in domestic abuse situations more easily.

Last year there were nearly 270,000 domestic abuse-related crimes in England and Wales, representing 8% of all calls to the police\*. Although existing laws already cover acts of violence, stalking and harassment, none of them specifically refer to personal relationships or domestic situations.

The Government's consultation will look at strengthening the law by explicitly stating that domestic abuse includes coercive and controlling behaviour as well as physical harm.

The move comes after the way police respond to domestic abuse was condemned as "alarming and unacceptable" in a report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in March.

Jennifer Roulston said: "I have seen so many local women and men who have suffered abuse, mental as well as physical, before their relationship breaks down. This is a universal issue and affects both genders, across all sections of society.

“The psychological damage caused by a controlling, bullying partner can be just as harmful as a black eye or bruised ribs. Some people are fearful for their lives, but for many, domestic abuse manifests itself as psychological terror; constant undermining, threatening behaviour; isolation from friends and family; and a loss of financial control.

“I have had clients who have been banned from wearing a particular colour because it belonged to the opposing football team. Bullying partners have monitored text messages, social media accounts, car mileage and even a change in hair style could provoke an angry outburst.

“To the outside world, these people often appear charming but behind closed doors, they can be violent, volatile and seek to control every aspect of their partner’s life, making them feel worthless and isolated.”

In support of the domestic abuse consultation, Home Secretary Theresa May said: "The government is clear that abuse is not just physical. Victims who are subjected to a living hell by their partners must have the confidence to come forward. I want perpetrators to be in no doubt that their cruel and controlling behaviour is criminal.

"We will look at the results of this consultation carefully in order to continue providing the best possible protection and support for victims of domestic abuse."

Victims of domestic violence are one of the few groups who are still eligible for legal aid in divorce cases. For more information contact Jennifer Roulston on 01925 604713 or email [Jennifer.roulston@fdrlaw.co.uk](mailto:Jennifer.roulston@fdrlaw.co.uk).

## **EDITOR’S NOTES:**

\* Figures provided by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary.

### **About FDR Law**

- FDR Law, formerly Forshaws Davies Ridgway LLP, is a full service legal practice with offices in Warrington, Stockton Heath and Frodsham.
- 16 Partners
- Over 100 staff
- Services include: Commercial Law, Conveyancing, Criminal, Family, Litigation, Wills & Probate.

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*On behalf of FDR Law*