



Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales
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6 July 2026

The Rt Hon David Lammy MP
Secretary of State for Justice
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9GL

CC: Lord James Timpson OBE
Minister of State for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9GL

Dear Lord Chancellor,
CC Lord Timpson

I am writing to urge the government to immediately pause the early release of any known domestic abuse perpetrator until the robust safeguards your government promised are in place to protect victims and survivors.

I recognise the unprecedented pressures facing the prison estate. However, as I have consistently said, victims cannot bear the consequences of this crisis.

When the measures were first announced – and throughout the passage of the Sentencing Act – I repeatedly warned your government of the risks domestic abuse victims face because of these changes.

The government's reassurances were specific. I was told proper checks would be carried out before anyone was released, and that victims and the services supporting them would be involved to build a full picture of the risk a perpetrator poses and how they would be managed once back in the community. I was also assured victims would be told about these changes clearly, and with enough time and support to plan for their safety. These were not vague commitments - they were the conditions on which this scheme was deemed acceptable to alleviate the capacity crisis and protect public safety.

To date none of them have been met. The risk assessment work has begun, but progress has been painfully slow and will not be completed before September. The communications sent to victims so far have caused widespread fear and confusion, leaving many with nowhere to turn – in part because the dedicated helpline promised in the Victims and Courts Act to provide that ongoing information and support has still not been set up. I understand that planning for it has not even begun.

As you know, for many victims, the time their perpetrator is in prison provides the only period in which they can take stock of their situation, plan for their safety and begin the long journey to recovery. Releasing perpetrators early with no mitigating protections not only robs them of that opportunity, but it also directly puts them in harm's way. In the last week alone, I have met with several survivors who have told me their perpetrator is set to be let out, and they are terrified of what may happen to them.

Public confidence depends on victims knowing that their safety remains the overriding priority but right now I do not see any steps being taken to ensure this is the case. You cannot stand by and let this be your legacy for the justice system.

In the interest of public protection, I am urging you to pause the inclusion of these offenders in the early release scheme until the government can demonstrate that:

- Pre-release risk assessments consistently include comprehensive information about the risk posed by an offender from victims and those supporting them;
- probation has the capacity to manage the additional risk;
- and victims will be properly notified and supported through a dedicated helpline.

The consequences of getting this wrong will not be administrative. They will be measured in lives irrevocably changed. You must do the right thing before further harm is done.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Jacobs', with a stylized, flowing script.

Dame Nicole Jacobs

Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales