**Domestic Abuse Bill – Marshalled Amendments 23, 28 and 62**

**Committee Stage Briefing from LSE's Centre for Economic Performance (CEP)**

**Key Points**

- LSE research is supporting **Marshalled Amendments 23, 28 and 62,** tabled by Baroness Grey-Thompson. Each is based on the **need for better technology and data use to detect and tackle abuse.**

- **Amendments 23 and 28** will ensure that the new Domestic Abuse Commissioner works with victims, academics, tech companies and others to advise on where technology and data can help tackle domestic abuse.

- Specific areas where the Commissioner might focus include: encouraging the use of new "silent" methods for victims to report abuse (especially important during lockdowns); using AI methods and supporting better data usage to determine the likelihood of repeated abuse and ensure police resources are used effectively; and opportunities for better data sharing, compiling and analysis between agencies.

- **Amendment 62** looks to ensure that police officers can take into account the previous criminal history of a potential abuser when considering whether to hand out a Domestic Abuse Prevention Notice (DAPN) – a key piece of data which is under-used in current efforts to prevent abuse.

**Background**

- The Domestic Abuse Bill comes at a crucial time. Recent LSE research finds that **during lockdown reported abuse by current partners, as well as family members, increased on average by 8.1% and 17.1% respectively, whereas abuse by ex-partners declined by 11.4%**. In England, domestic violence accounts for one-third of all assaults involving injury.

- Moreover, the increase in domestic abuse calls is driven by third party reporting, which suggests that there is significant under reporting by actual victims, particularly in households where the abuse cannot be reported by an outsider.

**Using Technology and Data to Target and Prevent Domestic Abuse**

- Predicting repeat incidents of domestic abuse is one way in which technology can help protect victims. **More than one in ten (11.8%) of people who call the police to report domestic abuse will call again within the year about a repeat violent attack**.

- The current method of predicting repeat incidents of domestic violence - through a risk-assessment form consisting of around 28 questions which police are required to ask to victims – is failing hundreds of victims. Instead, **machine-learning (AI) methods should be used to assess which victims of domestic violence are most at risk of further abuse**.

- Analysis of 16,203 cases of domestic violence enacted on one individual by another in Greater Manchester between 2014 and 2018 showed that **the current predictive system failed to classify 1,702 situations as "high risk" which subsequently saw a repeat attack within a year** – a "negative prediction rate" of 11.5%. The research found that by utilising machine-learning methods, **this negative prediction rate could be cut to between 7.3% and 8.7%**.

- Vitally, the research also found that by improving the information compiled during the investigation of domestic violence cases, to include details such as previous criminal convictions, incidents of violence, and the number of previous reports of domestic abuse, the negative prediction rate could be further cut to 6.1%. **Up to 1,234 repeat attacks missed under the current system would have been predicted under the machine-learning system with improved data**.

**Background**

- A crucial part of tackling abuse is **risk assessment** – determining what level of danger someone may be in so that they can receive help as quickly as possible, and prioritising police resources in responding to domestic abuse calls accordingly.

- This risk assessment is currently done through a standardised list of questions, administered to the victim by the responding officer, as well as the officer's assessment. **This DASH** (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour-Based Violence) **form consists of around 28 questions used to categorise the case as standard, medium or high risk**. If a case is assessed "high risk" this suggests an incident of serious harm could occur at any time, and triggers resources aimed at keeping the victim safe. **However, this DASH data is available only after an officer has appeared on the scene**.

- The research shows striking inconsistencies in DASH across the country. In 2014, HMIC found 10 police forces classified fewer than 10% of domestic abuse cases as "high risk", while 3 forces designated over 80% as "high risk". **This vast deviation casts significant doubt on the accuracy of current predictive methods**.

**Next Steps**

- The **Domestic Abuse Commissioner** can play a key role in pushing for the better use of data and technology, and improved data-sharing amongst forces and agencies. **Amendments 23 and 28 will ensure they have a specific remit to offer advice and guidance on technology and data use.**

- Data around previous criminal activity can play a key role in helping authorities tackle and prevent domestic abuse, but is current under-used and poorly shared between police forces. **Amendment 62 will explicitly ensure that data on previous criminal history can be used by police officers when considering handing out a Domestic Abuse Prevention Notice (DAPN).**