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The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) will:

- a) Raise awareness and understanding about the devastating impact of domestic abuse on victims, children, and families.
- b) Further improve the effectiveness of the justice system in providing protection for victims of domestic abuse and bringing perpetrators to justice.
- c) Strengthen the support for victims of abuse given by statutory agencies.
- d) The Act was signed into law on the 29th of April 2021.

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Key Features of the Act.

The Act creates a **statutory definition** of domestic abuse, emphasizing that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse.

As part of the statutory definition, **children will be explicitly recognized as victims** if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of abuse.

The Act will **extend the controlling or coercive behaviour offence** to cover post-separation abuse, and the **'revenge porn' offence** to cover the threat to disclose intimate images with the intention to cause distress

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The Act establishes in law the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner to stand up for victims and survivors and raise public awareness.

The Act created a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts (for example, to enable them to give evidence via a video link). Violent and sexual offence committed abroad by UK citizens will be able to be tried in UK courts.

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The Act places the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme ("Clare's law") on a statutory footing.

The Act prohibits perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in family and civil courts, and invalidates any courtroom defense of consent where a victim suffers serious harm or is killed

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The Act provides for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order, which will prevent perpetrators from contacting their victims.

Domestic abuse offenders can be subject to polygraph testing as a condition of their licence following release from custody.



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The Act places a **duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children** in refuges and other safe accommodation and provides that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance.

When local authorities rehouse victims of domestic abuse, they will not lose a secure lifetime or assured tenancy.

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Further information:

For more information check The Pan Beds Safeguarding Adults and Children from Domestic Abuse Guidance on Luton Tri.X Local Resources and the Pan Bedfordshire Safeguarding space -

<https://panbedfordshiresabs.trixonline.co.uk/>