



Domestic Abuse Protection

Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill 2024

Domestic abuse is a serious offence which has a devastating impact on victims and on children and young people who experience domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse can be difficult to report because the circumstances in which domestic abuse takes place can be complex. For example, victims may be reliant on their abuser due to their housing, financial or immigration status. Victims may be scared of their abuser and fearful about the impact reporting domestic abuse will have on their children and wider family. These factors may mean that there is a delay in reporting domestic abuse.

Some criminal offences are subject to a limitation period, which means that proceedings must be commenced within a specified period of time. Common assault is an offence which is subject to a limitation period of 6 months from the date of the alleged offence. Domestic abuse often involves the offence of common assault and a Government review has identified that the limitation period may act as an unfair barrier to prosecuting some cases of domestic abuse.

What does the Bill aim to do?

The Bill extends the limitation period for offences of common assault which involves domestic abuse to 2 years from the date of the alleged offence. This will enable appropriate cases to be prosecuted without unfairly preventing access to justice for victims who are unable to report the offending within 6 months.

The Bill safeguards the public interest in dealing with cases expeditiously by requiring that cases are still prosecuted within 6 months of the date of being reported.

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