

# Joint Statement on May 2025 Immigration White Paper



September 2025



## The impact on victim/survivors of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and modern slavery

As organisations working for the rights of migrant women victim/survivors of violence against women and girls (VAWG), trafficking, and modern slavery, we are deeply alarmed by the UK Government's White Paper "*Restoring Control over the Immigration System*";<sup>1</sup> the most devastating escalation in the UK's hostile immigration agenda, with far-reaching consequences. It sets out further restrictions on migration and tightening of immigration rules that will exacerbate harm and discrimination against migrant communities, particularly those already marginalised by the current system. We are appalled to see the government following the footsteps of its predecessors, enhancing the hostile environment, targeting migrant communities and blaming them for systemic issues and framing immigration as a threat, a strategy that lays the groundwork for dangerous political narratives and punitive policy making.

## Mainstreaming the far-right in immigration policies

In order to justify sweeping new restrictions, the government's White Paper constructs a misleading and institutionally racist narrative that scapegoats migrant communities for systemic failings of the State. In the foreword of the White Paper, Prime Minister Keir Starmer claims that immigration has caused *incalculable damage* to the UK. This political framing reinforces a dehumanising discourse that emboldens perpetrators of abuse, echoing the very language often used by them to silence migrant women. It falsely links high migration levels to stagnant GDP, labour market dysfunction, pressures on public services and criminality, claims that are not supported by reputable research that shows no consistent evidence that migration reduces GDP, and in some cases finds small positive impact.<sup>2</sup> By focusing on migration as the cause of societal issues, the government ignores the real drivers: decades of austerity, deregulation, and political choices that have hollowed out housing, healthcare, welfare systems and public safety. Regardless of the economic impact, the right to safety from violence is not conditional on a person's immigration status, and must not be treated as such by the government.

Migrant women are over-represented in low-paid precarious sectors such as care, cleaning, hospitality as well as in the informal economy where they often work without formal contracts or legal protections<sup>3</sup>. These roles are systemically undervalued, poorly regulated and increasingly portrayed as threats, a framing that legitimises abuse and exploitation, and drives fear. This narrative erases how hostile environment policies, unsafe migration routes, and insecure immigration status create the very conditions in which abuse and trafficking thrive. It also omits the UK's historical and ongoing role in creating and sustaining global inequalities and conflicts – a key driver that shapes

1 Home Office, May 2025, *Restoring control over the immigration system: white paper*. Online:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/restoring-control-over-the-immigration-system-white-paper>

2 Vargas-Silva, C., Sumption, M. and Brindle, B., 2024, The fiscal impact of immigration in the UK. Oxford: Migration Observatory, COMPAS, University of Oxford. Online: <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/the-fiscal-impact-of-immigration-in-the-uk/>

3 Women's Budget Group, 2020, *Migrant Women and the Economy A Report from the UK Women's Budget Group*. Online: <https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/WBG-28-Migrant-Women-Report-v3-Digital.pdf>

migration flows, particularly from formerly colonised countries, where exploitation and foreign policy interventions continue to force people to migrate. By pursuing policies stemming from this toxic narrative without meaningful consultation, the government repeats a familiar pattern: excluding the voices and experiences of vulnerable migrant women from policies that directly concern them. The absence of engagement with communities and specialist organisations not only reflects a broader disregard for the communities most marginalised but also risks deepening structural inequalities and systemic harms faced by migrant women as they remain unchallenged. In doing so, it advances reforms that will disproportionately harm racialised groups under the guise of fairness and control.

At the press conference ahead of the White Paper's publication in May 2025, the Prime Minister referred to the rise in migration as a *"squalid chapter for our politics, our economy, and our country"*, stating that due to immigration, the UK risks becoming an *"island of strangers"*. These remarks were widely condemned for their resemblance to Enoch Powell's infamous 1968 'Rivers of Blood' speech, in which the far-right politician linked immigration with violent disorder. In July 2025, the Deputy Prime Minister delivered a speech to the Cabinet in which she stated that immigration and economic deprivation have had a *"profound impact on society"*, whilst directly linking this to the violent riots that took place last summer. These statements represent a dangerous escalation in rhetoric allowing far-right narratives to dominate the political landscape. By drawing on historically racist tropes and linking migration to social unrest and criminality, this government is legitimising xenophobic narratives and fuelling division. This is made evident by how the social unrest has intensified, with ongoing anti-migrant protests taking place outside asylum accommodations. Far-right groups are exploiting the government agenda to justify hostility and violence towards migrants. This growing tension is creating an increasingly unsafe environment for migrant victim/survivors. The lack of clear information or accessible legal aid and support for those affected further worsens this harm, leaving the most vulnerable unable to navigate these sudden substantial changes, exacerbating the risk of losing status and therefore being more likely to fall prey to abusers and exploiters.

The focus on net migration, a concept rooted in exclusion and racial hierarchy, also reinforces the narrative that the government promotes. By positioning net migration as the central measure for 'improving' the immigration system, the government mainstreams far-right ideology into policy, with Black, racially minoritised and migrant communities bearing the brunt. Reducing people to numbers dehumanises individuals, treating them as mere statistics and dismissing people's lived experiences. Net migration targets have also been proven ineffective, with successive governments repeatedly failing to meet them, demonstrating that such targets are both unrealistic and unworkable.

That these are the most far-reaching changes to immigration policy in decades, introduced under a Labour government, marks a dangerous shift. As fascism rises globally, the UK government faces a choice, to continue to bolster far-right ideology or to stand against it and adopt a Human Rights approach. By entrenching far-right narratives into immigration policy, the government is choosing to normalise racism and create a pathway for state violence. The government's narrative shifts accountability away

from successive government failings and directs it at vulnerable migrant communities, advancing reforms that will disproportionately harm racialised groups under the guise of fairness and control.

## Migrant victim/survivors of domestic abuse

The government has committed to halve VAWG within a decade and states in the White Paper that it *“recognise(s) the challenges migrant victims of domestic abuse can face”*. It further promises to *“strengthen the protections in place to support them to take action against their abusers, without fear of repercussion on their immigration status.”* This approach fails to recognise and address the unique and intersecting structural barriers that migrant victim/survivors of VAWG face, as the current protections do not apply to the majority of women with insecure immigration status.

*By and for* organisations supporting migrant victim/survivors of VAWG witness on a daily basis how structural policies actively create vulnerability to abuse and exploitation. Migrant women face overlapping forms of insecurity and precarity caused by harmful policy and legislation, including limited or no access to quality legal aid; inability to access safe accommodation, financial support or mainstream domestic abuse refuges due to the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition; and data sharing agreements between statutory services, including the police, and immigration enforcement. These are not simply structural barriers, they are tools of control. Perpetrators of domestic abuse are not only aware of these vulnerabilities, but they also actively exploit them to abuse migrant women with impunity.

The inhumane NRPF condition singlehandedly makes women three times<sup>4</sup> more likely to be subjected to VAWG by denying them access to welfare and housing benefits. This often results in them being turned away from accessing refuge spaces, plunging them and their children into cycles of preventable abuse, destitution and homelessness. It is estimated that at least 32,000 victim/survivors with NRPF need state support. However, the current remit of protections is extremely limited, and only those on certain visa types can access the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession (MVDAC) which provides access to benefits and the Domestic Violence Indefinite Leave to Remain (DVILR) which allows them to regularise their status independently of the perpetrator.

To prevent thousands of victim/survivors from being trapped in cycles of abuse, it is urgent that the combined MVDAC-DVILR model is extended to all victim/survivors regardless of their immigration status. These measures have the unanimous support of the VAWG sector, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and were pledges made by the current government before taking office. Not only will they make it possible for thousands of victim/survivors to be safe, they are also projected to save the government £2 billion over a decade.<sup>5</sup>

4 The Unity Project, Access Denied: The Cost of the ‘No Recourse to Public Funds’ Policy, 2019, Online: <https://unity-project.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/AccessDenied-thecostoftheNoRecoursetoPublicFundspolicy.TheUnityProject.June2019.pdf>

5 London School of Economics, Cost-benefit analysis of extending support to domestic abuse victims with NRPF – A technical report for the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2022, Online: <https://www.lse.ac.uk/geography-and-environment/research/lse-london/documents/Reports/FINAL-REPORT-Dec-2022-COST-BENEFIT-ANALYSIS-OF-EXTENDING-SUPPORT-TO-DOMESTIC-ABUSE-VICTIMS-WITH-NRPF.pdf>

Fear of immigration enforcement remains one of the most significant barriers preventing migrant victim/survivors from seeking help and accessing justice. Until there is legislative and practice reform, including a firewall that prevents data-sharing between statutory agencies and Immigration Enforcement, migrant women and children facing abuse will continue to fall through the cracks. The government is not only failing to protect migrant victim/survivors, but actively choosing to continue to harm them, contradicting its own pledge to halve VAWG in a decade and breaking the promises made before taking office.

Stakeholders and the sector have repeatedly called for change. For example, the *Safety Before Status*<sup>6</sup> report from the Domestic Abuse Commissioner detailed how current immigration policies silence migrant victim/survivors and empower perpetrators. It called for crucial concrete reforms, including an end to data sharing and the establishment of safe reporting pathways for migrant victim/survivors. When in opposition, the current government had a notably different position. Labour MPs actively supported these recommendations by proposing amendments during the Committee Stage of the Victims and Prisoners Bill. Despite this, since taking office the proposals remain unimplemented. Jess Phillips MP emphasised at the time, *"I cannot stress enough the importance... about the need for a firewall between immigration services and the police,"*<sup>7</sup> highlighting the critical protections needed for migrant victim/survivors.

Four years have passed since the report's publication, and yet migrant victim/survivors have seen no changes. The failure to act on this evidence stands in direct contradiction to the government's own pledge to half VAWG in ten years, as these reforms are essential to meeting that target. By disregarding the report's evidence, the government continues to uphold a system that traps women in abuse and punishes them for seeking safety. In opposition, during the debates during the parliamentary journey of the Domestic Abuse Bill, Jess Phillips MP highlighted the cost of restricting support to migrant victim/survivors, *"Which of those victims have we forgotten? The only qualification for access to support, housing, refuge, social security, and police protection for victims of domestic abuse in this country should be this: are you human?"*

These systemic failures drive women with insecure status further into the margins, making them less likely to seek help or report abuse due to fears of detention, deportation or becoming destitute. Rather than enhancing safety or fairness, the measures proposed in the White Paper deepen mistrust in authorities and expose communities already subjected to marginalisation to greater harm, ultimately undermining the public interest.

If the government truly wants to *"ensure that victims feel confident to report to the police and proceed through the criminal justice system"*<sup>8</sup>, this requires meaningful reform and the dismantling of the hostile environment. By choosing to extend and expand hostile environment policies rather than dismantling them, the government is enabling abuse and reinforcing a two-tier system of protection where safety depends on a woman's

6 Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office, 2023, *Safety Before Status: How to ensure the Victims and Prisoners Bill meets the needs of all victims*. Online: [https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/FINAL-DOC\\_Firewall-Report\\_2023\\_V2.pdf](https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/FINAL-DOC_Firewall-Report_2023_V2.pdf)

7 UK Parliament, 2023, *Victims and Prisoners Bill (Fourteenth sitting)*. Online: [https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-07-11/debates/9512e4a8-5299-4e94-b2ae-a7dd5e09e33b/VictimsAndPrisonersBill%28FourteenthSitting%29?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-07-11/debates/9512e4a8-5299-4e94-b2ae-a7dd5e09e33b/VictimsAndPrisonersBill%28FourteenthSitting%29?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

8 UK Government, *Restoring Control over the Immigration System*, 2025, Online: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6821f334ced319d02c906103/restoring-control-over-the-immigration-system-web-optimised.pdf>

immigration status. The result is not protection, but State-sanctioned violence. If the government is serious about its pledge to halve VAWG in ten years, it must act now to protect all women, including migrant women, on the evidence that already exists.

## Labour market and immigration

The White Paper continues the harmful distinction between “low-skilled” and “high-skilled” workers, a framing that devalues essential work, particularly in care, cleaning, and support services. These roles are overwhelmingly held by Black, minoritised and migrant women and are vital to the functioning of our society, yet they are consistently underpaid and dismissed as low-skilled.

The proposed increase to the Skilled Worker visa salary threshold, rising from £38,700 to £41,700 is significantly higher than the current national average salary<sup>9</sup>, which will in effect exclude vast numbers of workers that are deeply needed in this country. Women are over two-thirds (68%) of migrants on family and dependant visas, which shows that many are already reliant on a partner for their immigration status for their right to be in the UK<sup>10</sup>. Additionally, the increase in salary threshold entrenches the gender pay gap within immigration policy and further restricts women’s access to independent migration routes, limiting their ability to live independently and free from abuse, by increasing their dependency on perpetrators of abuse and exploitation. Greater dependency on partners or sponsors also reduces access to protections such as the MVDAC, which, following the recent restrictions from the 2024<sup>11</sup> changes, now includes a three month cliff edge for support and excludes certain new cohorts, increasing women’s vulnerability to exploitation and harm.

These immigration policies also have significant consequences for service provision. *By and for* organisations, which are generally preferred<sup>12</sup> by Black, minoritised and migrant victim/survivors, but face a 39% shortfall in funding,<sup>13</sup> will not be able to meet the salary requirements introduced in the White Paper. This is already worsening the recruitment crisis in the sector, jeopardising our ability to retain staff with the lived experience of navigating the immigration and asylum systems and cultural awareness necessary to provide effective support to victim/survivors of abuse and exploitation. This poses an existential threat to our organisations, and to the only services that exist that centre Black, minoritised and migrant women.

9 According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the median gross annual earnings for full-time employees in the UK was £37,430 as of April 2024. Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2024, Employee earnings in the UK: 2024, Online: [https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2024?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2024?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

10 Women’s Budget Group, 2020, Migrant Women and the Economy A Report from the UK Women’s Budget Group. Online: <https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/WBG-28-Migrant-Women-Report-v3-Digital.pdf>

11 Joint letter on MVDAC changes, 2024, Online: <https://southallblacksisters.org.uk/app/uploads/2024/03/joint-letter-on-mvdac.pdf>

12 Domestic Abuse Commissioner, A Patchwork of Provision How to meet the needs of victims and survivors across England and Wales, 2021, Online: [https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DAC\\_Mapping-Abuse-Survivors\\_Summary-Report\\_Nov-2022\\_FA.pdf](https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DAC_Mapping-Abuse-Survivors_Summary-Report_Nov-2022_FA.pdf)

13 Statement on behalf of VAWG organisations in England & Wales on the Cost of Living Crisis, 2022, Online: <https://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/VAWG-Sector-Cost-of-Living-Statement-FINAL.pdf>

The proposed Temporary Shortage Occupation List introduces even more precarity for migrant women workers, as a wealth of evidence analysing the current schemes supports. By granting only limited access to migration pathways for roles experiencing labour shortages, the government positions migrant women workers as short-term stopgaps. These policies increase the risk of exploitation, as workers are more likely to accept poor conditions if they know their ability to stay in the UK is time-limited and dependent on employment. It also signals a lack of commitment to genuine workforce planning and sectoral investment.

The decision to scrap care worker visas is also alarming, as it not only places an already fragile sector under threat but also enhances the conditions in which exploitation can and will flourish. Rather than improving pay and conditions to retain workers, the White Paper proposes cutting off access to vital services provided by migrants, risking the collapse of the sector.

Finally, we wholly reject the government's framing of immigration control as a means of addressing labour exploitation. This narrative misrepresents the root causes of abuse in the labour market, which stem from weak labour protections and the abuse of power of employers. Instead of addressing these, the government has fuelled harmful enforcement practices, including workplace raids carried out this year, which target migrant workers rather than the exploitative employers who profit from their precarity.

## **Criminalisation of victim/survivors of VAWG and trafficking**

More than half of women in prison or under community supervision in the UK are victim/survivors of VAWG, including trafficking and exploitation. Instead of being recognised and supported, Black and minoritised, migrant women are too often criminalised, entering the Criminal Justice System (CJS) labelled as perpetrators rather than safeguarded as victim/survivors.

The White Paper intensifies this injustice. Under proposed changes, criminalised so-called 'Foreign National Offenders' will face automatic deportation after sentencing. This is a continuation and expansion of the Public Order Disqualification mechanism introduced by the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 under the last government. This policy fails to consider the large number of migrant victim/survivors of VAWG and trafficking whose convictions are directly linked to their experiences of abuse and exploitation. These include convictions for offences such as drug cultivation, theft, shoplifting or holding weapons, often committed under coercion or duress.

The White Paper also supports accelerated removals, curtailing the ability for Black and minoritised migrant women to appeal under Article 8 (right to private and family life) of the Humans Rights Act and penalising those who fail to disclose experiences of exploitation early despite the well documented barriers such as trauma, shame, fear of authorities, lack of interpreters and threats from perpetrators. This directly undermines the UK's obligations under the non-punishment principle, which states that victim/survivors of

trafficking should not be penalised for unlawful acts committed as a direct consequence of their exploitation. Such punitive measures contradict the aims of the Women's Justice Board, which seeks to reform women's justice by reducing the number of women in prison and addressing the distinct needs and vulnerabilities of women in the CJS that lead them to offend. This includes a focus on women who have experienced VAWG and racially minoritised women. The White Paper, as it currently stands, goes against these priorities and instead risks increasing the disproportional criminalisation of Black and minoritised migrant women.

These proposals intersect dangerously with recent changes to the Early Removal Scheme and Plan For Change, which calls for so-called foreign national criminals to face immediate deportation after sentencing, as well as upcoming sentencing reforms that increase the use of fixed term custody for women. This change follows legislation introduced by the government in June 2025 that allowed foreign national prisoners to be deported after serving 30% of their sentence rather than 50%. The new powers for immediate deportation will mean that women in contact with the criminal justice system who have been deported are barred from re-entering the UK. These new extreme measures will completely prevent victim-survivors from receiving appropriate safeguarding assessments, legal advice or the ability to pursue meaningful justice or referrals to trafficking support mechanisms. This also means that victim-survivors will not have the ability to make appeals from within the UK, further denying them their rights to justice.

Migrant victim-survivors of VAWG and trafficking continue to be overlooked within the CJS. Criminalisation is often a direct result of systemic failures in safeguarding, statutory support and gender informed justice. Many migrant women come into contact with the CJS after being failed by police, social services, the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) or mainstream VAWG services. This is a direct result of the hostile environment. Policies such as the NRPF condition prohibit access to essential support, including housing, benefits and vital domestic abuse services. This often leaves migrant women with no safe alternatives and ultimately forces victim/survivors into criminalised survival strategies due to a lack of options. The risk of criminalisation is even higher for women with an insecure immigration status or those who are undocumented, who have fewer legal pathways to protection, reduced trust in authorities, and greater vulnerability to exploitation.

The White Paper will accelerate the criminalisation to deportation pipeline, entrench racial and gender injustice, and further marginalise the most vulnerable victim/survivors of VAWG, exploitation and trafficking from safety, support and justice.

## Our urgent priorities for action:

We urge the government to end its current approach by addressing the following:

### ✓ **Abandon the UK Government's Immigration White Paper (May 2025) which harms victim/survivors of VAWG, trafficking, and modern slavery**

Hostile immigration policies continue to place migrant communities, particularly women at risk of abuse, exploitation and destitution. The government must take a Human Rights approach, end the NRPF condition, remove "right to rent" and "right to work" checks, and scrap salary thresholds and other barriers that exclude victim/survivors from safety and stability.

### ✓ **Implement safe reporting mechanisms**

All victim/survivors, regardless of their immigration status, deserve the chance to access support and justice without fear of immigration enforcement; a firewall is essential. Safe reporting mechanisms are in place in several cities and countries around the world with successful results.<sup>14</sup> The government must commit to treating victims as victims first and foremost and protect those most vulnerable. Their safety is a legal obligation; these protections are non-negotiable and must be embedded in law and practice.

### ✓ **End the criminalisation of victim/survivors of VAWG, trafficking and Modern Slavery**

The government must stop punishing victim/survivors for actions directly linked to their experiences of abuse, coercion and exploitation. Current policies violate the government's international legal obligations by treating Black and minoritised migrant women as criminals rather than recognising and supporting victim/survivors of VAWG and trafficking.

14 Latin American Women's Rights Service, Step Up Migrant Women Campaign – Example of good practice, online: <https://lawrs.org.uk/step-up-migrant-women-campaign/international-examples/>

## ✓ **Fully repeal the Illegal Migration Act (2023) and the Nationality and Borders Act (2022)**

The Illegal Migration Act and the Nationality and Borders Act introduced some of the most harmful and restrictive immigration measures in recent UK history, undermining access to protection for people fleeing violence, persecution and exploitation. These laws continue to put victim/survivors of trafficking, unaccompanied children, and others at risk of detention, removal, and destitution, regardless of their individual circumstances or needs. Partial reforms are not enough. The government must fully repeal both Acts and replace them with a fair, rights-based system that upholds the UK's obligations under international law.

## ✓ **Tackle systemic racism and structural inequalities**

Discriminatory enforcement, the NRPF condition, lack of access to legal aid and support further push Black and minoritised migrant women further into the margins. Safety and justice should not depend on a person's race, nationality or immigration status. The government must adopt an intersectional approach that recognises and addresses the complexity and overlapping barriers that Black, minoritised and migrant women experience.

## ✓ **Centre and provide ring-fenced funding for *by and for* organisations**

These organisations are essential to any VAWG strategy. Yet they remain chronically underfunded as *by and for* organisations are six times less likely to receive government funding.<sup>15</sup> Sustainable, ring-fenced core funding alongside full-cost recovery, long-term and multi-year funding commitments are necessary to enable effective planning and service delivery. This is not just vital for victim/survivors but financially necessary for the economy as research shows that by investing in *by and for* services that support victim/survivors with NRPF will save the government £127 million nationally over the course of three years.<sup>16</sup> Government resources should be allocated and redistributed adequately to protect and address the systemic barriers that affect Black and minoritised migrant women. Direct funding to *by and for* organisations is indispensable to ensure that those most affected by violence, exploitation and abuse receive meaningful support and are able to shape and lead the response with safety as a priority.

15 Domestic Abuse Commissioner, Exclusive new mapping data reveals a postcode lottery and patchwork of provision, 2022, Online: <https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/exclusive-new-mapping-data-reveals-a-postcode-lottery-and-patchwork-of-provision/>

16 Southall Black Sisters, Latin American Women's Rights Service, Safety4Sisters, Ubuntu Women Shelter, The Angelou Centre, Investing in Women Safety – The financial case for investing in *by and for* services supporting victim-srurvivors with No Reocurse to Public Funds, 2024, Online: <https://southallblacksisters.org.uk/app/uploads/2024/04/investing-in-safety-report-final.pdf>

Meaningful inclusion of *by and for* organisations in policy development is a must, especially if the government wants to fulfil their pledge to halve VAWG in ten years. This means going beyond consultations to ensure co-creation of policies, accepting and incorporating our policy recommendations into legislation, and guaranteeing a permanent seat at decision-making tables. This ensures that policy interventions are culturally appropriate, accessible and reflect the needs of Black and minoritised migrant women. The government must commit to embedding these organisations at every stage of policy development backed by long term mechanisms that guarantee justice, safety and trust in the system.

### **Extend the combined MVDAC-DVILR model to all victim/survivors regardless of immigration status**

Victim/survivors need both secure immigration status and state support to access safety. Extending this model aligns with the government's responsibility to protect all victim/survivors and ensures that safety does not depend on immigration status. This would permit those with insecure immigration status to access support and protection, empowering them to leave abusive situations. Beyond safeguarding victim/survivors, implementing this measure is a financially sustainable investment that reduces long-term costs for the state while fulfilling the government's legal and moral obligations.

The government can no longer claim to support victim/survivors and attempt to instill trust while actively upholding these deeply harmful policies. They, along with the discourse surrounding them, actively endanger migrant women. The White Paper proposals echo the same harmful agenda we condemned in our joint statement on the weaponisation of VAWG,<sup>17</sup> women's safety is being undermined not only by restrictive immigration policies but also by racist narratives that scapegoat migrant communities. Victim/survivors cannot be protected while government policy and public discourse continue to reinforce each other in ways that put them in danger. We demand an immigration system that prioritises victim/survivors protection; one that supports the right of Black, minoritised and migrant women to live free from violence and abuse.

17 End Violence Against Women Coalition, 100+ women's rights groups warn against racist weaponisation of VAWG, 2025, Online: <https://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/100-womens-rights-groups-warn-against-racist-weaponisation-of-vawg/>

### Signed:

1. Advance
2. After Exploitation
3. Agenda Alliance
4. Apna Haq
5. Asian Women's Resource Centre
6. Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid
7. Birth Companions
8. End Violence Against Women Coalition
9. Galop
10. Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit
11. HUMRAAZ
12. IKWRO
13. Imkaan
14. Jewish Women's Aid
15. Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation
16. Latin American Women's Aid
17. Latin American Women's Rights Service
18. Middle Eastern Women and Society Organisation (MEWSO)
19. nia
20. Respect
21. Rights of Women
22. Rochdale Women's Welfare Association
23. Roshni Birmingham
24. Routes Collective
25. SafeLives
26. Safety4Sisters
27. Solace
28. Southall Black Sisters
29. Southeast and east Asian Women's Association (SEEAWA)
30. The Prisma – The Multicultural Newspaper
31. Waling Waling organisation
32. Welsh Women's Aid
33. West London Welcome
34. Women Against Violence Europe
35. Women and Girls Network
36. Women for Refugee Women
37. Women's Aid Federation of England
38. Women's Resource Centre
39. Working Chance

### In solidarity:

1. Anti-Slavery International
2. Asylum Matters
3. Bail for Immigration Detainees
4. BARAC UK
5. Care4Calais
6. Clinks
7. East European Resource Centre
8. Employment Legal Advice Network
9. Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX)
10. Global Link
11. Govan community project
12. Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA)
13. Indoamerican Refugee and Migrant Organisation
14. JCWI
15. Kinari Education Community Interest Company
16. Latin Elephant
17. Law Centre NI
18. Maryhill Integration Network
19. Migrants in Action
20. Music Action International
21. National Women's Justice Coalition
22. No To Hassockfield
23. Praxis
24. RAMFEL
25. Rene Cassin
26. Right to Remain
27. Southeast and East Asian Centre CIC (SEEAC)
28. STAR (Student Action for Refugees)
29. The Drive Partnership
30. The William Gomes Podcast
31. Work Rights Centre