



Dame Sara Thornton DBE QPM, UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner  
Office of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner  
5th Floor, Globe House  
89 Eccleston Square London  
SW1V 1PN

Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner for E&W  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4JA

Dame Vera Baird QC, Victims' Commissioner for E&W  
Office of the Victims' Commissioner  
Clive House 5th Floor  
70 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9EX

6 July 2020

Dear Sara, Nicole and Vera

Thank you for your letter of 26 June, which expresses concerns about the discussion that took place between myself, and Southall Black Sisters at the Domestic Abuse Bill Committee evidence session on 4 June, on the issue of support for victims of domestic abuse who are also victims of modern slavery.

I am concerned that you may have misinterpreted my comments at the session. As you might expect, I chose my words in Bill Committee with care. Having checked the record, I was surprised that three Commissioners reached the same conclusion as set out in your letter.

To clarify, I was not suggesting that all victims of domestic abuse should be referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). However, where an individual has been a victim of domestic abuse, and modern slavery, then it is right that an NRM referral is considered in light of the individual needs of that person. Vulnerable victims of modern slavery living in abusive households may not be aware of the NRM and therefore I am keen to ensure that support services they do come into contact with signpost them appropriately and make them aware of their rights and entitlements.

I want to reassure you that this Government is committed to supporting vulnerable groups in society, including victims of domestic abuse and modern slavery, and ensuring they have access to the right support. It is clear we need to work together to achieve this.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me on this issue.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Victoria Atkins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Victoria Atkins MP**  
**Minister for Safeguarding**