

Statistical bulletin

Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2018

How domestic abuse is dealt with at the local level within England and Wales, using annual data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, police recorded crime and a number of different organisations.

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Notice

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This publication has been replaced. The latest figures on domestic abuse can now be found in the [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview](#).

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Things you need to know about this release](#)
3. [Understanding domestic abuse](#)
4. [Prevalence of domestic abuse](#)
5. [Domestic abuse recorded by the police](#)
6. [Police responses to domestic abuse](#)
7. [Outcomes of domestic abuse-related offences](#)
8. [Police referrals to the Crown Prosecution Service](#)
9. [Crown Prosecution Service prosecutions and convictions](#)
10. [Domestic violence remedy orders](#)
11. [Domestic abuse-related offences – specific crime types](#)
12. [Services available to victims of domestic abuse](#)
13. [Future work and ongoing development](#)
14. [Quality and methodology](#)
15. [Annex 1: Stages of the criminal justice process](#)
16. [Annex 2: Glossary](#)

1 . Main points

Over recent years there has been little change in the prevalence of domestic abuse estimated by the crime survey, while the number of cases recorded by the police has increased. However, the majority of cases do not come to the attention of the police, and many of those that do, do not result in a conviction for the perpetrator of the abuse.

The different data sources included in this report highlight how agencies within the criminal justice system and service sector respond to victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse. These data sources should be viewed in their entirety since each agency's response to domestic abuse is, in part, influenced by activity at other stages.

Headline figures

The latest figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales show little change in the prevalence of domestic abuse in recent years. In the year ending March 2018, an estimated 2.0 million adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year (1.3 million women, 695,000 men).

The police recorded 599,549 domestic abuse-related crimes in the year ending March 2018. This was an increase of 23% from the previous year. This in part reflects police forces improving their identification and recording of domestic abuse incidents as crimes and an increased willingness by victims to come forward.

The police made 225,714 arrests for domestic abuse-related offences (in the 39 police forces that could supply adequate data). This equates to 38 arrests per 100 domestic abuse-related crimes recorded.

The percentage of convictions secured for domestic abuse-related prosecutions is at its highest level since the year ending March 2010. In the year ending March 2018, 76% of prosecutions resulted in a conviction.

Referrals made to specialist domestic abuse services, including independent domestic violence advisors (IDVAs) and multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs), were most commonly made by the police in the year ending March 2018. Whilst other agencies such as social care and health care services are already involved in the response to domestic abuse, such involvement is not widespread.

2 . Things you need to know about this release

This statistical bulletin brings together data on domestic abuse to enable appropriate action to be taken to improve victims' experiences of the criminal justice process. It aims to encourage more victims to come forward to report abuse, knowing that there is appropriate support available for them. It also provides a clearer understanding of the criminal justice system's response to perpetrators of domestic abuse.

This report has been released prior to the [UN 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign](#). We have produced this statistical bulletin, working in collaboration with:

- Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)
- Home Office
- Ministry of Justice
- National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)
- SafeLives
- The ManKind Initiative
- The National Domestic Violence Helpline, run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge
- The Suzy Lamplugh Trust
- Victim Support
- Welsh Women's Aid
- Women's Aid Federation of England

This bulletin covers the different stages of the criminal justice process for cases of domestic abuse as well as bringing together a selection of data on service provision for victims of domestic abuse (see [Annex 1: Stages of the criminal justice process](#) for more information).

Domestic abuse is often a hidden crime that is not reported to the police. Therefore, data held by the police can only provide a partial picture of the actual level of domestic abuse experienced. Many cases will not enter the criminal justice process as they are not reported to the police. This explains why the estimated number of victims is much higher than police workload¹.

Increases in the volume of domestic abuse cases entering the criminal justice system can be attributed to many factors. These include police forces improving their identification and recording of domestic abuse incidents as crimes and an increased willingness by victims to come forward and report these crimes.

Similarly, data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) should not be viewed in isolation. The estimates from the survey show a higher level of domestic abuse, in terms of the number of victims, than other data sources. It also shows that the majority of victims will not report the abuse they have experienced to the police. Therefore, while the CSEW provides the best available estimate of trends in the prevalence of domestic abuse, they may not match trends in administrative data sources. The CSEW cannot be used to make any inferences about demands on the police, the criminal justice system's response to perpetrators, or service provision.

Data on domestic abuse services reflect support offered to victims that become visible to these services. Referrals can be made by a number of different agencies (or by the victim directly) so provision of these services may not be reliant on the reporting of domestic abuse to the police. This also means they may not necessarily result in a criminal justice outcome for the victim.

Cases may also drop out at any stage of the process. The different datasets included in this report do not relate to the same cases given the different timescales and reference periods used to collect the data. Data can be based on offences, victims, suspects or defendants and can also vary in the way that cases are identified. These factors, together with the time lag between the stages in the criminal justice process, mean that each section in this bulletin does not refer to the same cohort of cases and so direct comparisons cannot be made across sections². Throughout, caveats are provided to make it clear where a comparison can be made and where it may be more difficult or not possible to directly compare data sources.

Alongside this report we have published a [Domestic abuse statistics – data tool](#) that allows users to explore data for police force areas in more detail and compare these with similar areas within England and Wales. This tool should be viewed alongside this bulletin, where we provide explanation of the data and present a national picture of domestic abuse.

Statistics in this report are used to help monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Explore the UK data on our [SDGs reporting platform](#).

Notes for: Things you need to know about this release

1. The latest available estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that over four in five victims (83%) of partner abuse did not report the abuse to the police. For more information on why victims of partner abuse may not report the abuse to the police, refer to [Appendix Table 25](#) of the [Domestic abuse, findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#) release.
2. For example, a case reported to the police in one year may not appear with an outcome until after investigation the next year, or a case with a prosecution outcome in one year may have been initially reported to the police in a previous year.

3 . Understanding domestic abuse

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence. It can include repeated patterns of abusive behaviour to maintain power and control in a relationship. The current [cross-government definition](#)¹ of domestic violence and abuse recognises this and defines domestic abuse as:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling², coercive³, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional”

With the exception of coercive and controlling behaviour, which was introduced as a criminal offence on 29 December 2015, other acts of domestic abuse fall under generic offence categories in police recorded crime and criminal justice data, such as assault with injury.

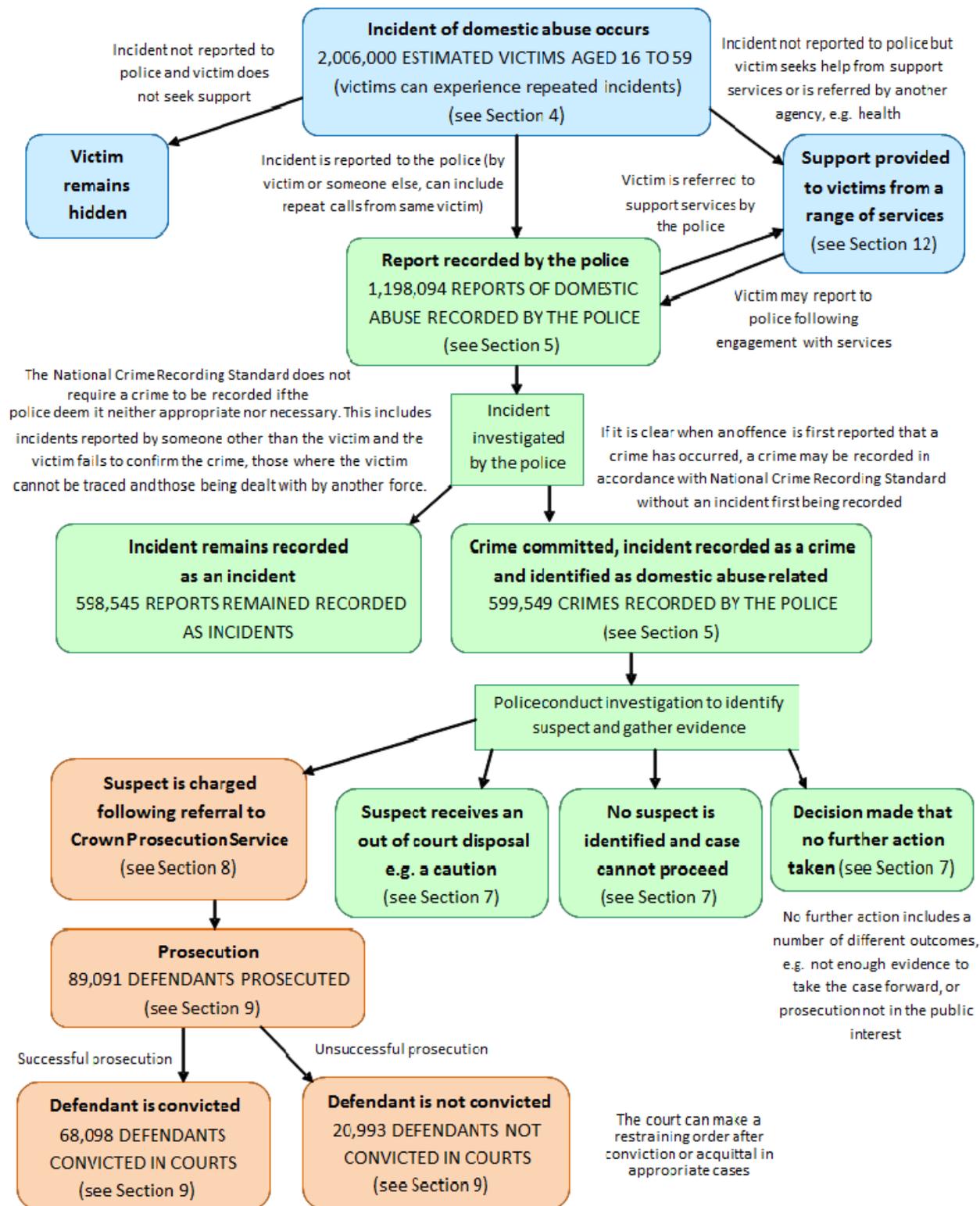
See [Annex 2: Glossary](#) for detailed definitions of other terms referred to in this bulletin.

Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system

Figure 1 explains how cases of domestic abuse are captured and flow through the criminal justice system. The data are not directly comparable, since they are collected on different bases (for example, victims, crimes, suspects or defendants) and may not cover the same cohort because of variation in the time taken for cases to progress through the system.

Figure 1: How data are captured and interlinked across the criminal justice system

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics

Although these datasets are not directly comparable, bringing the data together provides a picture of the level of attrition through the criminal justice system. Many victims of domestic abuse do not come to the attention of the police, which is why the estimated number of victims is much higher than the number of police recorded incidents and crimes. Of those incidents that are recorded, many will fall short of notifiable offences and are therefore not recorded as crimes.

Over half of domestic abuse-related crimes that are recorded by the police do not result in an arrest and a large proportion have evidential difficulties in proceeding with prosecution. Evidential difficulties often relate to the victim not supporting the prosecution. This reflects the challenges involved in investigating domestic abuse-related offences and demonstrates the importance of a robust evidence-led case being built for the victim.

Data on domestic abuse

Statistics on domestic abuse are produced separately by a number of different organisations in England and Wales. When taken in isolation, these statistics may not provide the context required by users to enable them to understand the national and local picture of domestic abuse.

Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, the Home Office Homicide Index and the Ministry of Justice are classified as [National Statistics](#). Police recorded crime and outcomes data from the Home Office are classified as [official statistics](#). National Statistics are a subset of official statistics that have been certified by the [UK Statistics Authority](#) as compliant with its Code of Practice for Statistics.

All other data included in this report are sourced from administrative datasets that do not fall within the scope of official statistics.

The way in which data on domestic abuse are collected differs between sources and organisations. As such it is necessary to look at the data presented in this report in its entirety since each individual stage of the system is, in part, influenced by activity at a prior stage. In particular, improving the police's ability to investigate, solve, and support the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in prosecuting domestic abuse cases is dependent upon understanding and improving many elements of domestic abuse investigations.

The data included in this report provide a national picture of domestic abuse in England and Wales, whereas the [data tool](#) allows users to explore data for police force areas and compare across similar forces. Relying exclusively on the available data without understanding the local context risks misunderstanding how effectively domestic abuse is being tackled. The tool is intended to help shape the questions that need to be answered by police forces and other agencies working with victims and responding to perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Where possible, the data presented in this report provide a breakdown by sex and the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator. In the majority of the analysis, this refers to the sex of the victim rather than the perpetrator and in some cases the victim may be the same sex as the perpetrator.

Data on victims of domestic abuse have been broken down by protected characteristics such as ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation where possible, showing the variation in service response to different demographic groups. SafeLives produce a series of [reports](#) that focus on groups of victims who may be hidden from services, or face additional barriers to accessing support such as [LGBT+ groups](#) and individuals experiencing [honour-based violence or forced marriage](#). Additional research on LGBT+ victims of domestic abuse has recently been published by [Stonewall](#) and the [Government Equalities Office \(GEO\)](#).

Notes for: Understanding domestic abuse

1. The Crown Prosecution Service applies the government definition to all victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse irrespective of age.
2. Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
3. Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

4 . Prevalence of domestic abuse

This section presents findings from respondents interviewed in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) during the year ending March 2018. Estimates are based on the self-completion module on domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking¹. The age range for respondents eligible for the self-completion module was expanded in April 2017, changing from adults aged 16 to 59 years to adults aged 16 to 74 years living in households² in England and Wales. Due to having only one year's worth of data on this new age group, this publication has continued to report primarily on 16- to 59-year-olds. Data for 60- to 74-year-olds are provided separately in accompanying tables.

The measurement of domestic abuse in the CSEW combines partner abuse (non-sexual), family abuse (non-sexual) and sexual assault or stalking carried out by a current or former partner or other family member. This broadly matches the government's definition of domestic violence and abuse. However, currently the CSEW estimates do not completely capture the new offence of coercive and controlling behaviour. New survey questions to better estimate experiences of this type of abuse are still under development.

An estimated 2.0 million adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2018, equating to a prevalence rate of approximately 6 in 100 adults (Figure 2). Women were around twice as likely to have experienced domestic abuse than men (7.9% compared with 4.2%). This equates to an estimated 1.3 million female victims and 695,000 male victims (see [Appendix Table 1](#) for more information). The estimates do not take into account the context and impact of the abusive behaviours experienced. [Research](#) suggests that when coercive and controlling behaviour is taken into account, the differences between the experiences of male and female victims become more apparent.

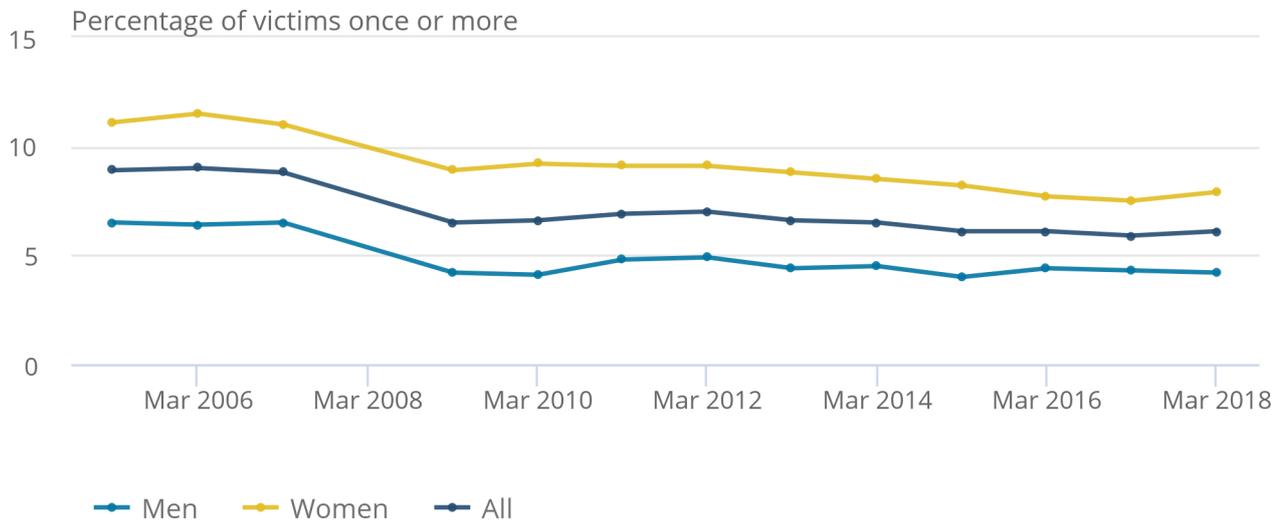
The latest figures show little change in the prevalence of domestic abuse in recent years. However, the cumulative effect of these changes has resulted in a small, significantly lower prevalence for the year ending March 2018 (6.1%) compared with the year ending March 2012 survey (7.0%). This indicates a gradual, longer-term downward trend.

Figure 2: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by sex

Crime Survey for England and Wales, March 2005 to year ending March 2018

Figure 2: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by sex

Crime Survey for England and Wales, March 2005 to year ending March 2018



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. No data point is available for the year ending March 2008 because comparable questions on stalking, an offence that makes up the domestic abuse category, were not included in that year.

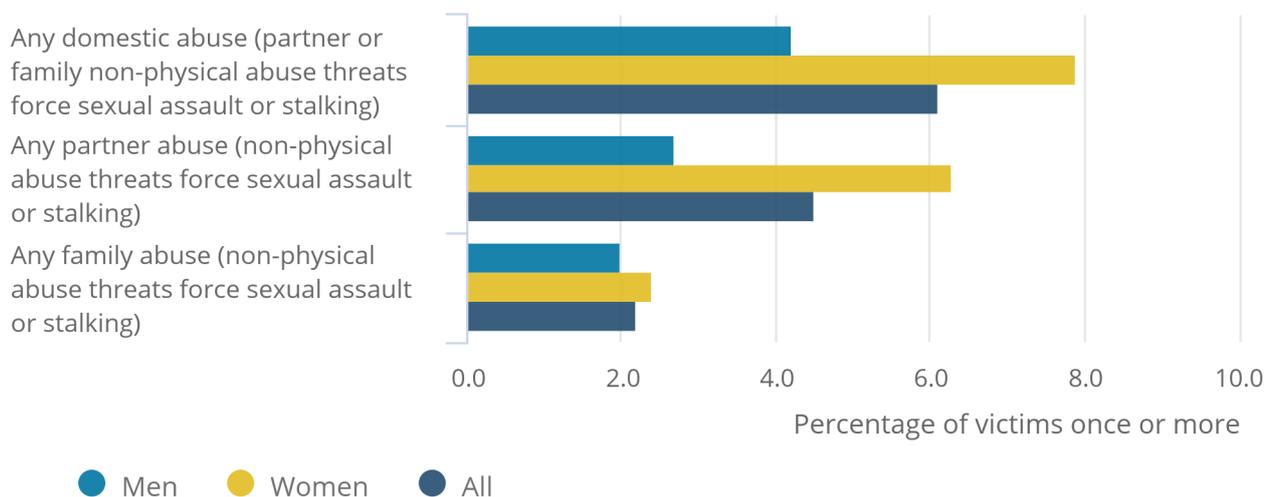
The most common type of domestic abuse experienced in the last year was partner abuse, with 4.5% of adults reporting this type of abuse. Around twice as many women reported experience of partner abuse in the last year than men (6.3% compared with 2.7%). However, similar proportions of men and women reported experience of family abuse (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by type of abuse

Crime Survey for England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 3: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by type of abuse

Crime Survey for England and Wales, year ending March 2018



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Chapter 5 of the [User guide](#) provides definitions of the various types of intimate violence.

Although the CSEW is a large sample survey, there are a relatively small number of victims of the different types of domestic abuse interviewed in any one year. Consequently, more detailed analysis on types of domestic abuse experienced has been completed on a dataset combining the three survey years ending March 2016 to March 2018 (see [Appendix Table 3](#)). This analysis shows:

- the majority of victims of domestic abuse in the last year experienced one type of abuse (81%)
- half of victims who experienced one type of abuse experienced partner abuse (52%), which for the purposes of this analysis comprises non-physical abuse, threats or use of force and does not include sexual assault or stalking carried out by a partner
- women were more likely than men to have experienced multiple types of abuse in the last year (21% compared with 17% respectively)
- the most common combination of two types of abuse was partner abuse (non-physical abuse, threats or force) and stalking (7%), which could be by either a partner or family member

More detailed information from the CSEW on domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking, as well analysis on the nature of partner abuse, is available in the [Domestic abuse, findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#) article.

Notes for: Prevalence of domestic abuse

1. For more information, refer to the [Domestic abuse, findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#) release.
2. Individuals staying in refuges, halls of residence and custodial settings are not covered by the survey.

5 . Domestic abuse recorded by the police

The Home Office is responsible for the collation of recorded crime data supplied by the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales, plus the British Transport Police¹.

Offences that are domestic abuse-related will be recorded under the respective offence that has been committed, for example, assault with injury. This is because (with the exception of coercive and controlling behaviour) domestic abuse is not a specific criminal offence. The Home Office has been collecting information from the police on whether recorded offences are related to domestic abuse since April 2015², but it is not possible to determine how many crimes were domestic abuse-related prior to this date. This system relies on the police flagging offences as domestic abuse-related and it is possible that some offences may not be correctly identified.

Domestic abuse-related offences include “[coercive or controlling behaviour in an intimate or family relationship](#)”, which was introduced as an offence in December 2015. The law captures coercive control that does not relate to a single incident but is a pattern of repeated or continuous behaviour that occurs over a period of time to exert power, control or coercion over a victim³. For more information and data on coercive and controlling behaviour, refer to [Section 11: Domestic abuse-related offences – specific crime types](#).

Domestic abuse-related incidents

An incident can be reported to the police by victims, members of the public or can be referred by a police officer or a “third party”, including professionals such as NHS staff and social workers. Once a domestic abuse-related incident has been reported, an investigating officer will decide using the information available whether a crime should be recorded in accordance with the [National Crime Recording Standard \(NCRS\)](#). If it is clear when the incident is reported that an offence has occurred, the police may record the incident as a crime immediately without first recording the incident as a starting point. This will depend on the local processes of police forces, the nature of each call and its urgency and the needs of each victim.

Police incident data on domestic abuse cover reports of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 16 years and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members (regardless of gender or sexuality). These domestic abuse-related incidents data cover reports where, after initial investigation, the police have concluded that no notifiable crime was committed.

Incidents of domestic abuse that did result in a crime being recorded by the police are included in data on domestic abuse-related crimes. To get a total picture of the demand upon the police that relates to domestic abuse, it is necessary to consider both domestic abuse-related incidents and offences.

There were a total of 1,198,094 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes⁴ recorded by the police in England and Wales in the year ending March 2018. Of these, 598,545 (50%) were incidents not subsequently recorded as a crime (see [Appendix Table 9](#))⁵.

Domestic abuse-related crimes

There were 599,549 domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police across England and Wales in the year ending March 2018. This amounted to 50% of all domestic abuse-related crimes and incidents recorded by the police. This proportion compares with 43% of domestic abuse-related crimes and incidents in the previous year, equating to a volume increase of 111,500 offences since the year ending March 2017 (from 488,049 offences, see [Appendix Table 6](#)).

Some of this increase is likely to be, in part, driven by an increase in domestic abuse-related incidents coming to the attention of the police, as well as general police improvements in crime recording practices. The increase could also indicate an increased willingness of victims to come forward to report domestic abuse. In contrast, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) shows similar levels in prevalence of domestic abuse in recent years (see [Section 4: Prevalence of domestic abuse](#) for more information).

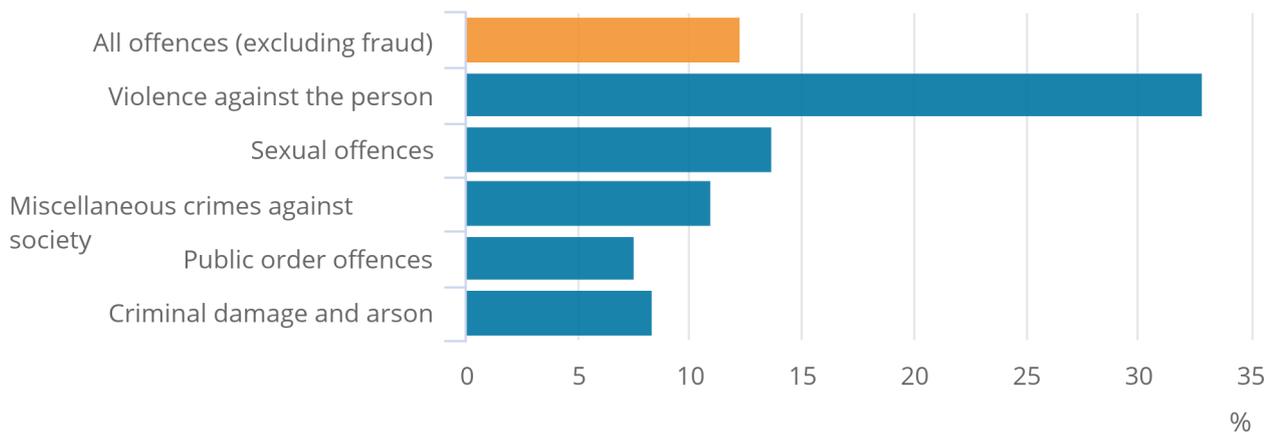
Violence against the person offences were the most likely to be domestic abuse-related, comprising one-third (33%) of these offences. The offence group with the next highest proportion of offences being domestic abuse-related was sexual offences (14%; Figure 4). The proportions of different offences that were flagged as domestic abuse-related were similar to the previous year.

Figure 4: Proportion of offences recorded by the police that were flagged as domestic abuse-related, selected offence groups

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales

Figure 4: Proportion of offences recorded by the police that were flagged as domestic abuse-related, selected offence groups

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Domestic abuse-related offences are defined as any incidence of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 16 years and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

Experimental statistics on domestic abuse by sex of victim

Domestic abuse-related offences by age and sex of victims have been analysed using data from the Home Office Data Hub⁶. There were 28⁷ forces that supplied data on the sex of victims and 24⁸ forces that supplied data on the age of victims.

In three-quarters of domestic abuse-related offences the victim was female (75%). This proportion was similar for the majority of offence categories, but for domestic abuse-related sexual offences the proportion of victims that were female was even higher, at 96% (Figure 5).

For both rape and sexual assault, offences where the victim was female were more likely to be domestic abuse-related than where the victim was male (see [Appendix Table 11](#)).

Figure 5: Proportion of domestic abuse-related offences recorded by the police by sex of victim, selected offence groups (28 forces)

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales

Figure 5: Proportion of domestic abuse-related offences recorded by the police by sex of victim, selected offence groups (28 forces)

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office Data Hub

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Based on 28 forces with adequate data.

For the 24 forces with adequate data⁹, 53% of violence against the person offences where the victim was female were flagged as domestic abuse-related. In contrast, 21% of violence against the person offences where the victim was male were flagged (Figure 6). For women, as the age of the victim increased, the proportion of violent offences that were domestic abuse-related tended to decline. For women aged 25 to 34 years, 58% of all police recorded violence was domestic abuse-related, compared with 38% for those aged 75 years and over (Figure 6). The actual number of both domestic abuse-related offences and non-domestic abuse-related offences decreased by age for all victims.

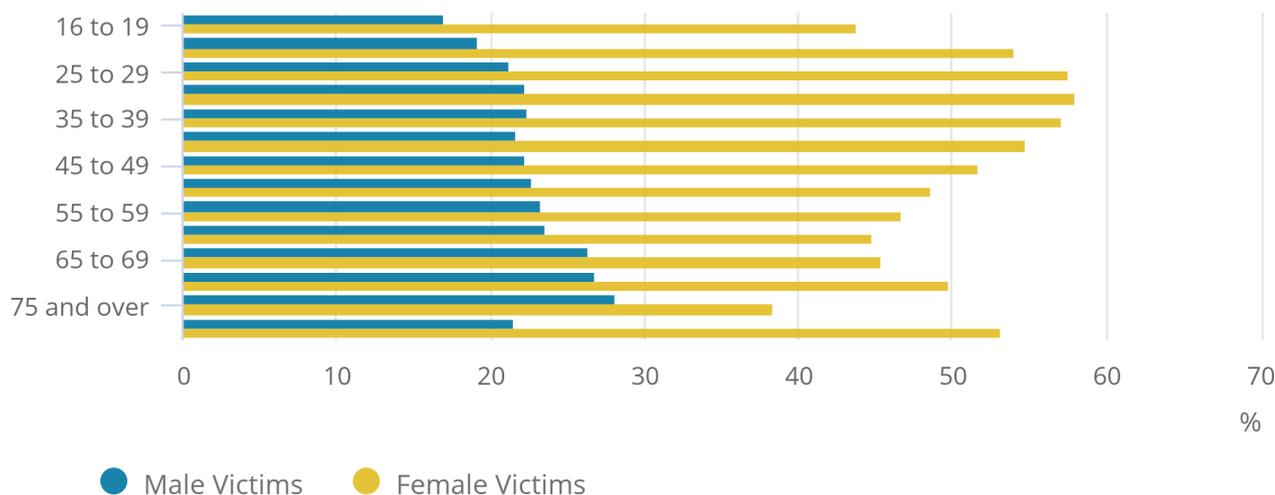
In contrast, among men the proportion of violent offences that were domestic abuse-related tended to increase with age, from 17% for 16- to 19-year-olds to 28% for those aged 75 years and over. This was partly due to the large decline in non-domestic abuse-related violence, which declined at a faster rate than domestic abuse-related violence.

Figure 6: Proportion of violence against the person offences recorded by the police that were flagged as domestic abuse-related, by age and sex of victims (24 forces)

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales

Figure 6: Proportion of violence against the person offences recorded by the police that were flagged as domestic abuse-related, by age and sex of victims (24 forces)

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office Data Hub

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Based on 24 forces with adequate data.

Child protection referrals from domestic abuse incidents

The National Police Chiefs' Council [Guidance on investigating domestic abuse \(PDF, 1.6MB\)](#) states that police officers should investigate the welfare of all children who have witnessed domestic abuse or who are normally resident at an address at which a domestic abuse-related incident has been reported. Where there is any concern as to the welfare or safety of a child, officers should make a notification to the police child abuse investigation unit (CAIU). Any referrals made to local authority children's social care departments should, where possible, be made by officers from the CAIU.

Forces have systems in place to make referrals where appropriate. These generally involve response officers completing a vulnerable child form or a section on the domestic abuse risk assessment form to alert Public Protection Units (PPU) and children's social services. Referrals can also be made via Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASHs) or Central Referral Units (CRUs). Some forces use additional checks to identify the risk to children at domestic abuse incidents, for example, the use of [Operation Encompass](#).

As part of their annual inspection cycle, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) recorded a total of 201,656 child protection referrals as a result of domestic abuse-related incidents in the year ending March 2018 (see [Appendix Table 24](#)). This figure is based on adequate data supplied by 25 police forces in England and Wales. Multiple child protection referrals can be made for each domestic abuse-related incident recorded by the police. Therefore, it is not possible to link the number of child protection referrals to the number of domestic abuse-related incidents recorded.

Notes for: Domestic abuse recorded by the police

1. For more information on how police forces submit their data to the Home Office, please refer to Section 3.1 of the [User guide to crime statistics](#).
2. In response to a recommendation in the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) 2014 report [Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse](#), police forces are asked to "flag" crimes as being domestic abuse-related if the offence meets the government definition of domestic violence and abuse.
3. This offence is now included in the [Home Office Counting Rules](#), under the category of "Assault without injury".
4. There may be some cases where an incident may be recorded and then a crime may subsequently be recorded in a different time period, for example, an incident recorded on 31 March, a crime recorded on 1 April.
5. An example of a domestic abuse-related incident not resulting in a crime being recorded could be the reporting of shouting between two individuals from their neighbour's house to the police, who subsequently find that no notifiable crime has occurred.
6. This is an improved record-level data collection system designed to streamline the process by which forces submit data. Migration of forces to the Data Hub is ongoing.
7. Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire, BTP, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cleveland, Devon and Cornwall, Durham, Dyfed-Powys, Essex, Gloucestershire, GMP, Gwent, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Humberside, Kent, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex and Thames Valley.
8. Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cleveland, Dyfed-Powys, Essex, Gloucestershire, GMP, Gwent, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Humberside, Kent, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex and Thames Valley.
9. The analysis may not be representative of all forces in England and Wales, however, for these 24 forces, the proportion of violence against the person offences that were flagged as domestic abuse-related was 33%, similar for all forces (33%).

6 . Police responses to domestic abuse

Between September and November 2017, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) visited each police force in England and Wales to examine how effective they were at keeping people safe and reducing crime. As part of this inspection process, HMICFRS examined how effectively forces protected vulnerable people from harm and supported victims. This included a focus on domestic abuse.

HMICFRS collected data from police forces on arrests, bails and voluntary attendances for domestic abuse-related offences¹. Not all police forces are covered because not every force could provide the data. The latest [progress report \(PDF, 840KB\)](#) by HMICFRS highlights concerns over the variation in arrest rates across police forces.

The police made 225,714 arrests for domestic abuse-related offences (in the 39 police forces that could supply adequate data) in the year ending March 2018. This equates to 38 arrests per 100 domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by these forces in the same period. In addition to arrests, HMICFRS recorded 23,760 instances of voluntary attendance where the suspect attended a police station voluntarily to assist with investigation (see [Appendix Table 24](#)). This equates to four voluntary attendances per 100 domestic abuse-related crimes among the 27 forces able to supply adequate data.

Domestic Violence Protection Orders and Domestic Violence Protection Notices

[Domestic Violence Protection Orders \(DVPOs\) and Domestic Violence Protection Notices \(DVPNs\)](#) were introduced across all 43 police forces in England and Wales on 8 March 2014. DVPOs are a civil order that provide protection to victims by enabling the police and magistrates' courts to put in place protective measures in the immediate aftermath of a domestic violence incident. DVPOs are often used where there is insufficient evidence to charge a perpetrator and provide protection to a victim via bail conditions.

A DVPN is the initial notice issued by the police to provide emergency protection to an individual believed to be the victim of domestic violence. This notice, which must be authorised by a police superintendent, contains prohibitions that effectively prevent the suspected perpetrator from returning to the victim's home or otherwise contacting the victim. A DVPN may be issued to a person aged 18 years and over if the police superintendent has reasonable grounds for believing that:

- the individual has been violent towards an associated person
- the individual has threatened violence towards an associated person
- the DVPN is necessary to protect that person from violence or a threat of violence by the intended recipient of the DVPN

A DVPO can prevent the perpetrator from returning to a residence and from having contact with the victim for up to 28 days. An application for a DVPO by the police to a magistrates' court should be completed within 48 hours of the DVPN being served on the perpetrator. The [latest progress report \(840KB\)](#), on police responses to domestic abuse, published by HMICFRS, referenced the importance of DVPOs being supported by robust risk management processes. The report stated that police training should reinforce the application of DVPOs to all forms of domestic abuse, not just physical abuse.

A total of 29 forces could provide data on both the number of DVPNs applied for and the number granted by a superintendent. For these forces, 96% of DVPNs applied for were granted (4,219 out of 4,408 applications). A lower proportion of DVPOs applied for were granted by a magistrates' court (86% based on 40 forces, see [Appendix Table 25](#) for more detail)². DVPOs are granted by a magistrate, whereas DVPNs can be approved by a police superintendent; this may explain the disparity between the approval of both DVPNs and DVPOs.

Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law)

The [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#) (DVDS, commonly known as Clare's Law³) was brought into effect in March 2014. The scheme has two routes:

- "right to ask" – this enables someone to ask the police about a partner's previous history of domestic violence or violent acts
- "right to know" – the police can proactively disclose information in prescribed circumstances

Every request under the DVDS is thoroughly checked by a panel made up of police, probation services and other agencies to ensure information is only passed on where it is deemed lawful, proportionate and necessary.

Individual processes in place across forces for considering and approving applications may vary. Trained police officers and advisers are then on hand to support victims through the difficult and sometimes dangerous transitional period.

For the 40 forces that were able to supply data on both applications and disclosures under the DVDS, 57% of the 6,313 “right to know” applications made resulted in disclosures (3,594) in the year ending March 2018. A lower proportion (44%) of the 4,655 “right to ask” applications resulted in disclosures in the same year (2,055 based on 41 forces providing both figures; see [Appendix Table 25](#)). These figures varied by police force area (refer to the [Domestic abuse statistics – data tool](#) or [Appendix Table 25](#) for more detail).

Notes for: Police responses to domestic abuse

1. Voluntary attendances act as an alternative to arrest where the suspect attends a police station voluntarily to assist with investigation.
2. Breaches of DVPNs and DVPOs can be recorded regardless of the date of issue and therefore are not presented because they are not comparable to those granted.
3. This initiative was named after Clare Wood who was murdered by her ex-boyfriend in 2009, who unbeknown to her had a record of violence against women.

7 . Outcomes of domestic abuse-related offences

This section covers how domestic abuse-related offences recorded in the year ending March 2018¹ have been dealt with by the police. Some of these cases may still be under investigation and therefore have not yet been assigned an outcome. The analyses presented are based on data from 29² of the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales that supplied adequate data to the Home Office Data Hub³. In total, 94% of these domestic abuse-related offences had been assigned an outcome by the time the data were extracted⁴.

There were notable differences in outcomes between domestic abuse-related offences and offences that were not flagged as domestic abuse-related. Violence against the person offences made up the majority (77%) of all domestic abuse-related cases in the year ending March 2018. The following points focus on the outcomes of domestic abuse-related violence offences (Figure 7, [Appendix Table 22](#)):

- domestic abuse-related violence offences had a higher proportion of charge or summons outcomes assigned than non-domestic abuse-related violence offences (15% compared with 9% respectively)
- given the nature of the offences, there were very few cases of domestic abuse-related violence where no suspect was identified (1%), whereas this outcome was assigned for 21% of non-domestic abuse-related violent offences
- the police were more likely to assign evidential difficulty outcomes for domestic abuse-related violent offences (in 71% of cases) than non-domestic abuse-related violence offences (50%)
- nearly one in two (49%) domestic abuse-related violence offences had evidential difficulties outcomes where the victim did not support action and just over one-fifth (22%) had evidential difficulties where the victim did support action

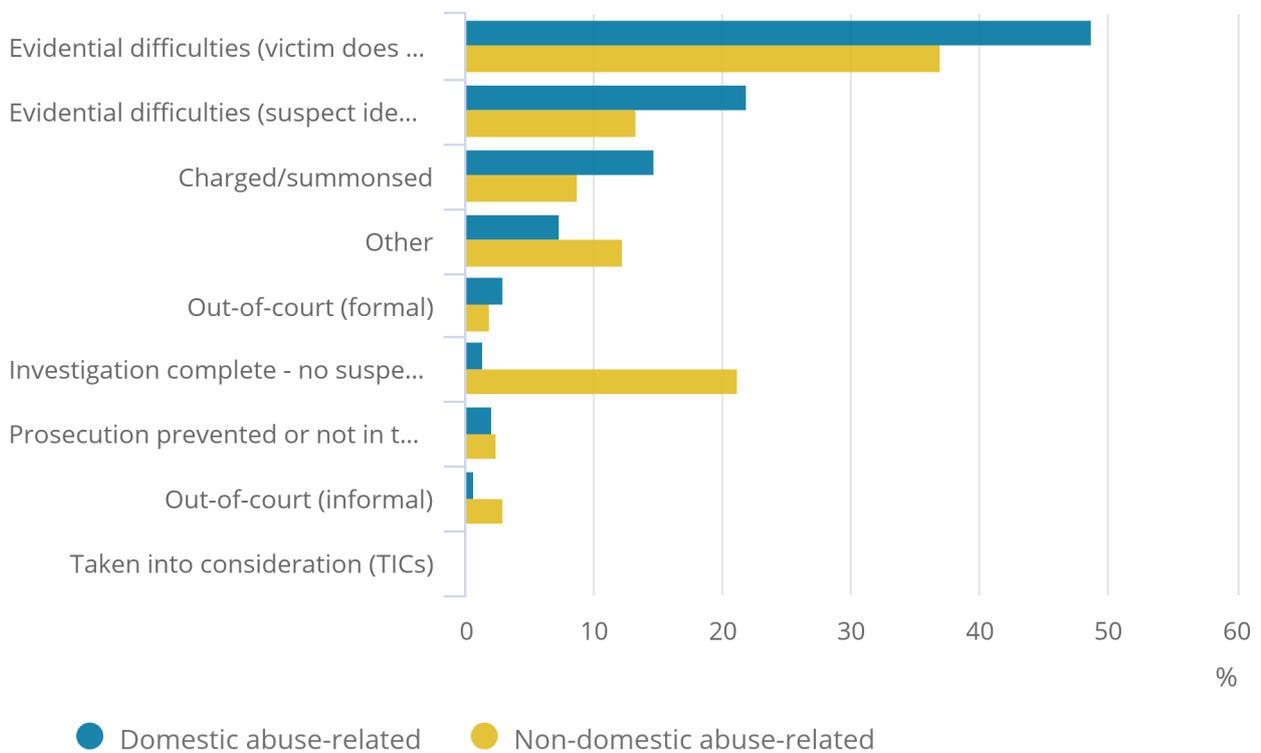
Victims may not want to be involved in investigations for a number of reasons, for example, due to the level of fear and control exerted by the perpetrator. Generally, a higher proportion of evidential difficulties outcomes were assigned to domestic abuse-related offences compared with non-domestic abuse-related offences (see [Appendix Table 22](#)). These figures reflect the challenges involved in investigating domestic abuse-related offences, despite the majority of suspects being identified.

Figure 7: Outcomes assigned to domestic abuse-related violence against the person offences and non-domestic abuse-related violence against the person

Year ending March 2018 by outcome group, England and Wales

Figure 7: Outcomes assigned to domestic abuse-related violence against the person offences and non-domestic abuse-related violence against the person

Year ending March 2018 by outcome group, England and Wales



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office Data Hub

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Based on 29 police forces that supplied adequate data.
3. Offences asked to be taken into consideration by a court (TICs) have been excluded from this analysis because there are no domestic abuse-related violence against the person offences that were assigned this outcome.
4. Out of court (formal) includes caution – adults; caution – youths; Penalty Notices for Disorder.
5. Out of court (informal) includes cannabis or khat warnings and community resolutions.
6. Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest includes not in the public interest (CPS); not in public interest (police); offender died; prosecution prevented (suspect under age; suspect too ill; victim or key witness dead or too ill); prosecution time limit expired.
7. Evidential difficulties (victim does not support action) includes evidential difficulties where the suspect was or was not identified and the victim does not support further action.
8. Other includes action undertaken by another body or agency; further action to support formal investigation not in the public interest; offences not yet assigned an outcome.

Domestic abuse-related sexual offences had a larger proportion of offences not yet assigned an outcome (28%) than any other domestic abuse-related offences (see [Appendix Table 22](#)). This is a similar proportion to sexual offences that were not domestic abuse-related (27%; see [Appendix Table 22](#)). Evidential difficulties outcomes were assigned to 64% of domestic abuse-related sexual offences compared with 42% of non-domestic abuse-related sexual offences. This reflects the added complexities around investigations of domestic abuse-related sexual offences.

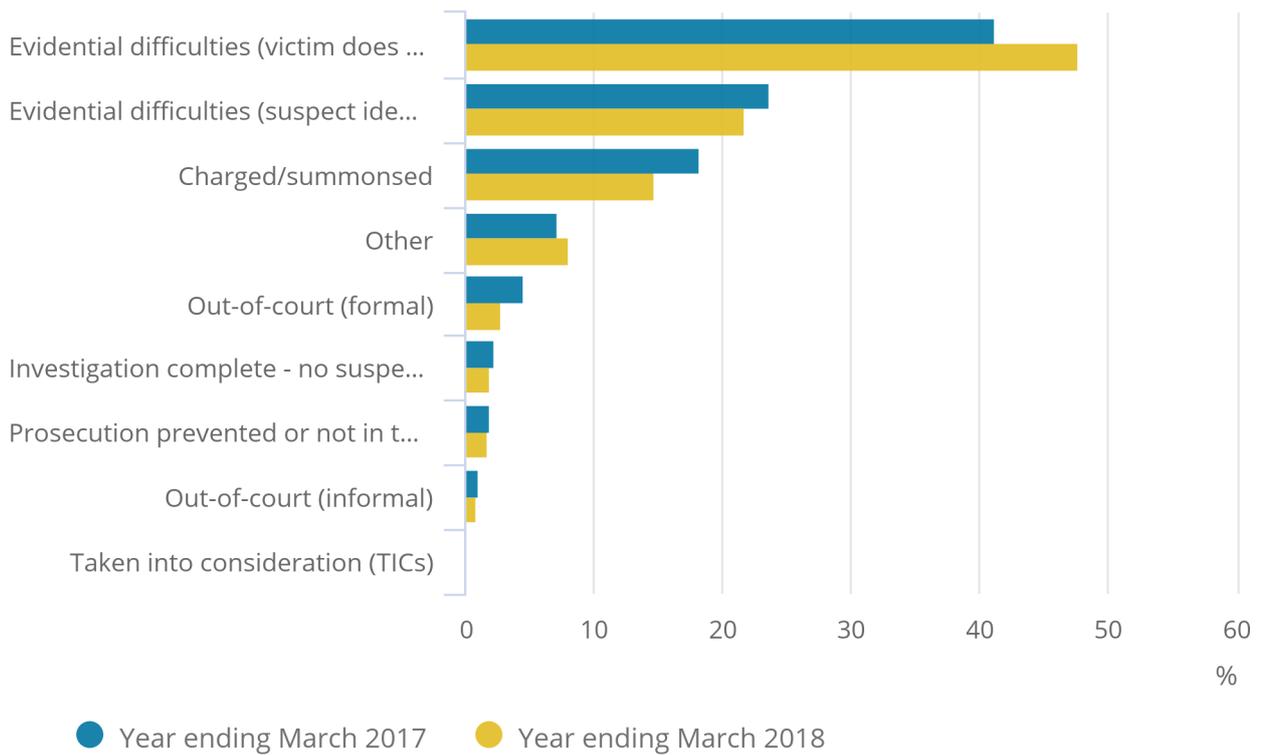
Outcomes data for the year ending March 2018 can be compared against figures for the previous year based on 26 forces that provided adequate outcomes data for both years⁵. The proportion of domestic abuse-related offences that resulted in a charge decreased from 18% in the year ending March 2017 to 15% in the year ending March 2018. The proportion of domestic abuse-related offences that had evidential difficulties where the victim did not support action increased from 41% in the previous year to 48% in the year ending March 2018 (Figure 8). This may reflect the increased likelihood of more complex or challenging cases being dealt with by the police.

Figure 8: Outcomes assigned to domestic abuse-related offences recorded in the year ending March 2018 compared with the year ending March 2017

England and Wales

Figure 8: Outcomes assigned to domestic abuse-related offences recorded in the year ending March 2018 compared with the year ending March 2017

England and Wales



Source: Home Office Data Hub, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Based on 26 police forces that supplied adequate data in June 2017 and August 2018.
3. Taken into consideration refers to offences asked to be taken into consideration by a court (TICs).
4. Out of court (formal) includes caution – adults; caution – youths; Penalty Notices for Disorder.
5. Out of court (informal) includes cannabis or khat warnings and community resolutions.
6. Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest includes not in the public interest (CPS); Not in public interest (police); Offender died; Prosecution prevented (suspect under age; suspect too ill; victim or key witness dead or too ill); Prosecution time limit expired.
7. Evidential difficulties (victim does not support action) includes evidential difficulties where the suspect was or was not identified and the victim does not support further action.
8. Other includes action undertaken by another body or agency; further action to support formal investigation not in the public interest; offences not yet assigned an outcome.

[Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(HMICFRS\)](#) have highlighted the increasing proportion of domestic abuse cases that are closed due to evidential difficulties, where the victim does not support action, as an area of improvement for some police forces. They state that clear standards for building the best possible case for the victim are vital including cooperation with specialist domestic abuse services, which increases the likelihood of victims engaging with the criminal justice system.

Time taken to assign outcomes

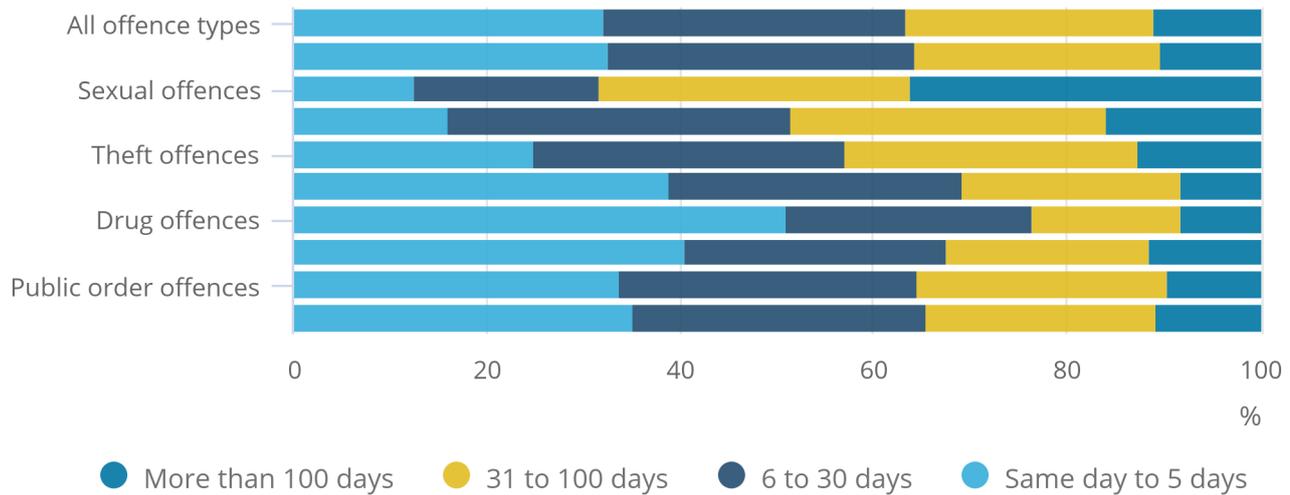
Approximately 3 in every 10 domestic abuse-related offences (32%) in the year ending March 2018 had an outcome recorded within five days of the offence being recorded. Around one-third (31%) of outcomes were assigned between 6 and 30 days from when the police recorded the offence and around one-quarter (26%) were assigned between 31 to 100 days. The remaining 11% were assigned more than 100 days after the offence was recorded. This varied by offence type (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Length of time between domestic abuse-related offences and outcomes being recorded, by offence type

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales

Figure 9: Length of time between domestic abuse-related offences and outcomes being recorded, by offence type

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office Data Hub

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Based on 29 police forces that supplied adequate data.
3. Includes offences recorded in the year ending March 2018 that had been assigned an outcome by the time the data were received by the Home Office in June 2018.

The length of time taken to assign an outcome to domestic abuse-related violent crimes was similar to the length of time taken to assign an outcome to non-domestic abuse-related violence offences. Around one-third of domestic abuse-related violence offences (32%) and non-domestic abuse-related violence offences (29%) took between 6 and 30 days to have an outcome assigned (see [Appendix Table 20](#)).

Domestic abuse-related sexual offences had a higher proportion that took over 100 days to assign an outcome (36%) compared with non-domestic abuse-related sexual offences (29%). A lower proportion had an outcome made within five days (13%) compared with non-domestic abuse-related sexual offences (29% and 20% respectively). This indicates that sexual offences as a whole are often more complex to investigate, particularly when there is a domestic relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.

Notes for: Outcomes of domestic abuse-related offences

1. These data are an update of data published in [Crime outcomes in England and Wales 2017 to 2018](#), and will not match due to forces reconciling their data.
2. Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire, British Transport Police, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cleveland, Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Durham, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Norfolk, North Wales, North Yorkshire, Northamptonshire, Northumbria, South Wales, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Thames Valley, West Yorkshire and Wiltshire.
3. This is a record-level crime system that police forces have been progressively switching over to. While all police forces provide data on domestic abuse-related offences, information on the outcomes of these offences is only available from the Home Office Data Hub and only 29 forces provided adequate domestic abuse and outcomes data via the Data Hub for this period.
4. Early June 2018.
5. Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire, British Transport Police, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cleveland, Devon and Cornwall, Durham, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, North Wales, North Yorkshire, Northamptonshire, Northumbria, South Wales, Staffordshire, Surrey, Thames Valley, West Yorkshire and Wiltshire.

8 . Police referrals to the Crown Prosecution Service

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is the principal prosecuting authority for England and Wales, acting independently in criminal cases investigated by the police and others. CPS data are available through its Case Management System (CMS) and associated Management Information System (MIS)¹. CPS domestic abuse data are dependent upon lawyers and administrative staff correctly identifying applicable cases and flagging the case on the CMS. These data are accurate only to the extent that flags have been correctly applied.

For CPS data, a domestic abuse flag may be applied at the beginning of a case, or applied later in the prosecution process if a domestic abuse relationship becomes apparent. There is a time lag between every stage of the criminal justice process: between police referral to the CPS for charging, prosecution, conviction and sentencing. For example, a domestic abuse case could be referred to the CPS in 2016, but a conviction may not be secured until 2017. As a result, the data presented in this report on referrals, prosecutions and convictions do not necessarily follow on from each other and caution should be taken when making comparisons².

CPS data include both child and adult defendant and victim data and do not strictly align with the government definition of domestic abuse, which only applies to those cases where both the victim and perpetrator are aged 16 years and over.

CPS pre-charge decisions

CPS charging data cover those cases, by suspect, referred to the CPS by the police for a charging decision.

There were 110,562 referrals of domestic abuse-related cases from the police to the CPS in the year ending March 2018. This is a fall of 271 referrals from the previous year (110,833 referrals, see [Appendix Table 26](#)). This compares with a 23% increase in domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police in the same period. In their [latest progress report \(PDF, 840KB\)](#), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) explain that police forces and the CPS are examining the reduction in referrals to the CPS and variations across police forces. This could be affected by various factors including differing systems and processes, relationships between the police and CPS, and quality of evidence.

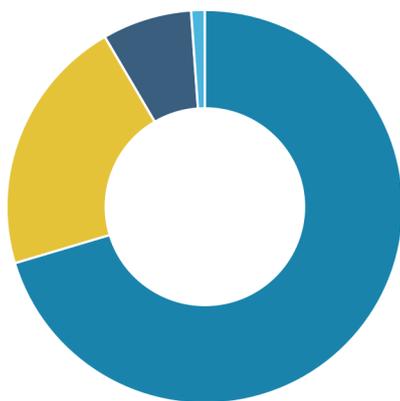
In the year ending March 2018, out of all the domestic abuse-related cases that were referred to the CPS, 70% resulted in a decision to charge, equating to the charge of 77,725 defendants (a fall of 2% from the previous year; see [Appendix Table 26](#)). In just over one-fifth (21%) of cases there was a decision not to prosecute and 1% had an out of court disposal³. The remaining 7% of domestic abuse-related cases were administratively finalised (Figure 10). The administrative finalisation code means that the CPS has not made a charging decision on a case brought to them by the police⁴.

Figure 10: Pre-charge decisions for domestic abuse-related cases

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales

Figure 10: Pre-charge decisions for domestic abuse-related cases

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales



Source: Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

Notes:

1. CPS data are not designated as official statistics.
2. "Other" makes up less than 1% of pre-charge decisions, and therefore are not included.

The volume of domestic abuse-related cases resulting in a charge has fluctuated over the last seven years. However, the trend in the percentage of domestic abuse-related pre-charge decisions⁵ that resulted in a charge has been relatively stable⁶ (Table 1).

Table 1: Domestic abuse-related cases where a suspect was charged, year ending March 2010 to year ending March 2018

England and Wales

	Apr '09 to Mar '10	Apr '10 to Mar '11	Apr '11 to Mar '12	Apr '12 to Mar '13	Apr '13 to Mar '14	Apr '14 to Mar '15	Apr '15 to Mar '16	Apr '16 to Mar '17³	Apr '17 to Mar '18
Number	62,087	68,927	66,184	60,189	72,905	84,711	82,157	79,413	77,725
Percentage	68.1	68.1	69.6	68.3	70.4	68.9	69.7	71.7	70.3

Source: Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

Notes

1. Data from CPS are not designated as official statistics. [Back to table](#)
2. During the year ending March 2014, a revised method of reporting the outcomes of charging decisions was developed. The revised method has been used in this report (for both the current year and the back series of data) which provides a more accurate figure for the percentage of defendant cases which proceeded to prosecution. For this reason, the data will differ from that reported by the CPS prior to the year ending March 2014. [Back to table](#)
3. The percentage of cases charged covers those domestic abuse cases, by suspect, forwarded to CPS during the year ending March 2018 for charging decisions and are not directly comparable in numbers with those prosecuted which covers cases, by defendant, finalised during the year ending March 2018. [Back to table](#)

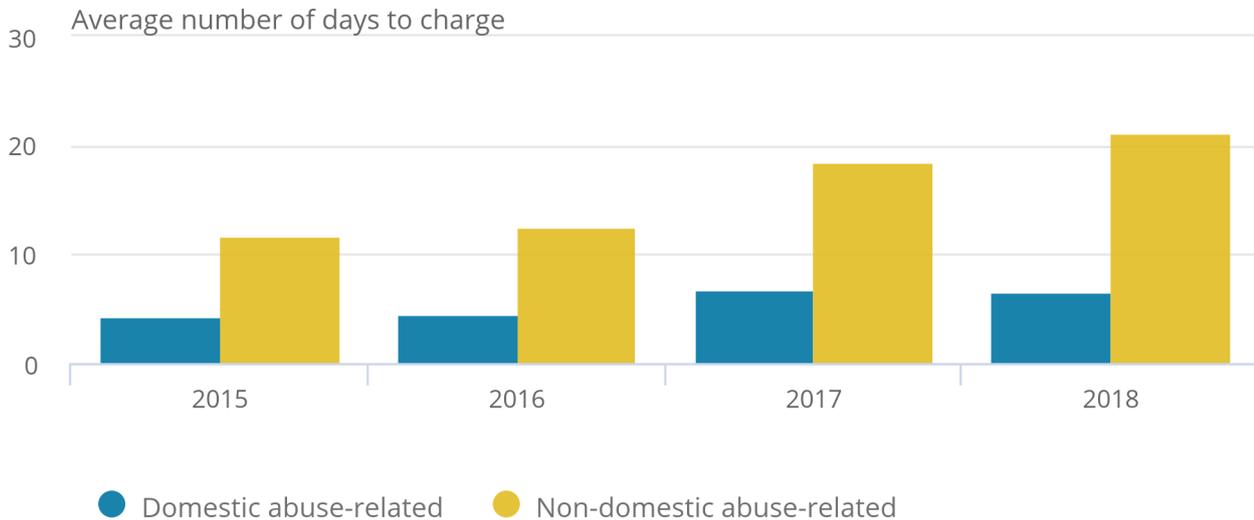
The average number of days taken for a decision to charge⁷, ⁸ to be made in domestic abuse-related cases was 6.6 days in the year ending March 2018. This is an increase of approximately two days in the last three years⁹. This was shorter than non-domestic abuse-related cases, which took an average of 21.1 days to charge in the year ending March 2018 (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Average number of days to charge domestic abuse-related and non-domestic abuse-related cases

Year ending March 2015 to year ending March 2018, England and Wales

Figure 11: Average number of days to charge domestic abuse-related and non-domestic abuse-related cases

Year ending March 2015 to year ending March 2018, England and Wales



Source: Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

Notes:

1. CPS data are not designated as official statistics.

Disclosing private sexual images without consent

Offences involving the “disclosure of private sexual photographs and films with the intent to cause distress or anxiety”, commonly referred to as “revenge porn”, were made a specific criminal offence in April 2015¹⁰. The CPS record how many prosecutions involving the offence have been flagged as domestic abuse-related. Of the 464 prosecutions commenced in the year ending March 2018¹¹, 86% (400) were flagged as being domestic abuse-related (Table 2). This is an increase from the comparable proportion (84% or 389 cases) of domestic abuse-related prosecutions in the previous year.

Table 2: Number and proportion of domestic abuse-related "revenge porn" prosecutions, year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2018

England and Wales

	Apr '15 to Mar '16		Apr '16 to Mar '17		Apr '17 to Mar '18	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Domestic abuse-related	184	89.3	389	83.7	400	86.2
Non domestic abuse-related	22	10.7	76	16.3	64	13.8
Total	206	100.0	465	100.0	464	100.0

Source: Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

Notes

1. Data from CPS are not designated as official statistics. [Back to table](#)
2. "Revenge porn" involves the disclosure of private sexual images without consent with the intention to cause anxiety or distress. [Back to table](#)

Notes for: Police referrals to the Crown Prosecution Service

1. The CPS collects data to assist in the effective management of its prosecution functions and therefore does not collect data that constitute official statistics as defined in the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#).
2. Note the percentage of cases charged covers those domestic abuse cases, by suspect, forwarded to CPS during the year ending March 2018 for charging decisions and are not directly comparable in numbers with those prosecuted, which covers cases, by defendant, finalised during the year ending March 2018.
3. An out of court disposal is where a caution, conditional caution, reprimand or final warning is given or the offence has been considered in relation to other charges.
4. At any stage in the investigation (prior to a charging decision being given) the police may decide that the case does not meet charging criteria and end the investigation without returning to the CPS for further consultation. As a result, the CPS will administratively finalise the case because no actual charging decision has been made by them. It also includes cases where a suspect has died before charges had been authorised or where a suspect has failed to answer police bail.
5. The decisions made by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on referrals from the police.
6. The CPS is continually striving to improve the quality of data used in both internal and external reports. During the year ending March 2014, a revised method of reporting the outcomes of charging decisions was developed. The revised method has been used in this report (for both the current year and the back series of data), which provides a more accurate figure for the percentage of defendant cases that proceeded to prosecution. For this reason, the data will differ from that reported in CPS publications prior to the year ending March 2014.
7. The CPS Case Management System (CMS) data report the average number of calendar days since the first decision was sought by the police, to the date in which the last decision made was to charge. The data include those cases where the police were required to submit further evidence prior to a decision to charge being made and those more serious complex cases including cases involving a death, rape and serious sexual offences, child abuse, large-scale or long-term fraud and cases with substantial or complex video or audio key evidence, which all must be referred to CPS Area-based Prosecutors.
8. The system is unable to separately record the timeliness of those cases that were subject to advice and further work before a charge decision was made and recorded as the last decision.
9. The data include all cases where the decision was made on the same day by CPS Direct, and those cases that must be referred to CPS Area-based Prosecutors by way of face-to-face, telephone, or written advice and consultation with the police. The data also include cases where a decision to charge was made after the police were required to submit further evidence prior to a decision to charge being made.
10. These offences are included within the offence category of "harassment" under the Home Office Counting Rules.
11. The CPS data are only available from the offence-based data system and therefore cannot include data on police referrals, charging and outcomes.

9 . Crown Prosecution Service prosecutions and convictions

Prosecutions cover domestic abuse-related cases, by defendant, finalised during that year¹. There was a total of 89,091 prosecutions for domestic abuse-related offences in the year ending March 2018, which accounted for around 17% of all prosecutions in England and Wales. This figure shows a volume decrease in the number of domestic abuse-related prosecutions compared with the previous year (93,590).

Over three-quarters of domestic abuse-related prosecutions were successful in securing a conviction in the year ending March 2018. Although the change in this proportion from year-to-year has been small, the latest figure of 76% is at its highest level since the year ending March 2010 (72%; see [Appendix Table 26](#)).

The defendant pleaded guilty in 70% of the domestic abuse-related cases referred to the CPS. Of the 68,098 successful domestic abuse-related prosecutions in the year ending March 2018, 91% were due to a guilty plea, a figure which has remained relatively flat over the last seven years. The remaining 9% of successful domestic abuse-related prosecutions in the year ending March 2018 secured a conviction following a trial and 0.2% were proved in absence. The percentage of convictions following a trial has ranged from 6% to 7% between the year ending March 2010 and the year ending March 2018 (see [Appendix Table 26](#)).

Around one-quarter (24%) of domestic abuse-related prosecutions were unsuccessful in securing a conviction, equating to 20,993 prosecutions. Of these unsuccessful convictions, around one-quarter (26%) were due to victim retraction, where the evidence of the victim supports the prosecution case, but the victim refuses to be called as a witness, or retracts or withdraws a complaint. Just over one-quarter (26%) of unsuccessful prosecutions were due to victim non-attendance, where the victim is called as a witness in a trial, but fails to attend court. The proportion of unsuccessful prosecutions that resulted in victim non-attendance has increased every year, with the exception of the latest year, which saw a slight fall compared with the previous year (see [Appendix Table 26](#)).

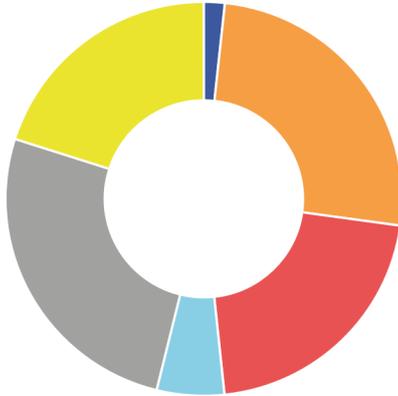
In 2% of unsuccessful prosecutions the evidence given by the victim did not support the case. In these cases, the victims have not retracted their evidence, but it does not support the prosecution of the defendant, leading to an unsuccessful outcome (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Reasons for unsuccessful domestic abuse-related prosecutions

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales

Figure 12: Reasons for unsuccessful domestic abuse-related prosecutions

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales



Source: Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

Notes:

1. CPS data are not designated as official statistics.
2. Other reasons refer to: caution, bindover, essential legal element missing, unreliable witness, all other reasons and administrative finalisations. Data are no longer collected on 'Effect on Victim/Witness mental health'. 'Other reasons' refer to a number of explanations for an unsuccessful outcome including missing statements and breach of Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).

Victims may not want to be involved in the prosecution for a number of reasons, for example, due to the level of fear and control exerted by the perpetrator, or because of a lack of sufficient response or support from agencies. The CPS provide training to Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) who support domestic abuse victims including support through special measures and speaking to victims at court.

The 2017 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report, [A progress report on the police response to domestic abuse \(PDF, 1.5MB\)](#), found there was an increased focus among police forces to developing evidence-led prosecutions around domestic abuse. The report also found that there was emerging evidence to support the use of body-worn video cameras to collect evidence at the scene, so that prosecutions can continue even if the victim does not support further action.

In spring 2017, the CPS provided additional mandatory e-learning training on coercive and controlling behaviour and evidence-led prosecutions to all prosecutors to enable them to focus on developing robust prosecutions, even where the victim is unable to support the prosecution.

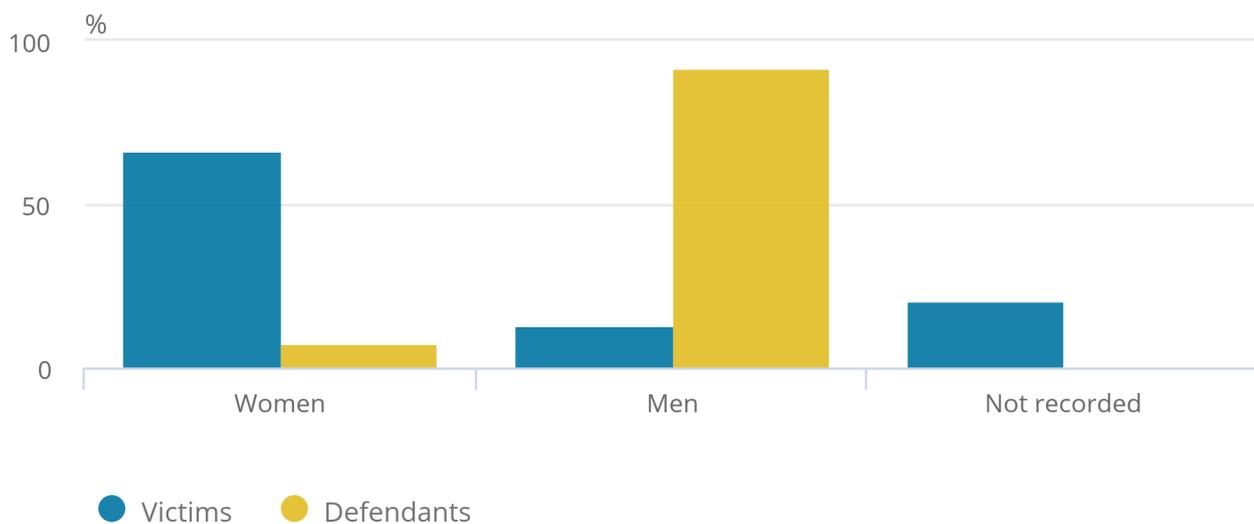
Reflecting the profile of victims and perpetrators shown in earlier sections, the vast majority of defendants in domestic abuse-related prosecutions were men in the year ending March 2018 (92%, Figure 13)². In contrast, the majority of victims were female (66%) and 13% were male. However, the sex of the victim was not recorded in over one-fifth (21%) of prosecutions³. If this category was excluded from the analysis, the proportion of female victims would be 83%, with 17% male victims.

Figure 13: Sex of victims and defendants in domestic abuse-related cases

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales

Figure 13: Sex of victims and defendants in domestic abuse-related cases

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales



Source: Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

Notes:

1. CPS data are not designated as official statistics.
2. The CPS records some limited data, identifying the number of victims in the Witness Management System. This is a system used by Witness Care Unit (WCU) staff to manage cases. Not all cases are managed by WCUs and a number of CPS areas do not use this system. It follows that there are many cases for which victim information is not recorded. As a result, it is not possible to correlate data on the sex of victims against data on the sex of defendant.

Notes for: Crown Prosecution Service prosecutions and convictions

1. The percentage of cases charged covers those domestic abuse-related cases, by suspect, forwarded to the CPS during the year ending March 2018 for charging decisions and are not directly comparable in numbers with those prosecuted, which covers cases, by defendant, finalised during the year ending March 2018. One defendant may have committed a number of offences, usually, although not exclusively, against one victim.
2. Data showing the sex of defendants are held in the CPS Management Information System; however, the records are not always complete. The sex of the defendant is unknown in some cases and may not be recorded in others.
3. The proportion of cases where the sex of the victim was unknown increased from 17% in the year ending March 2016. The CPS records some limited data, identifying the number of victims in the Witness Management System. This is a purpose-built electronic system designed to enable Witness Care Unit (WVU) staff to manage their cases. Victim data are only recorded if a case is handled by a WCU that uses the system. Not all cases are managed by WCUs and a number of CPS areas do not use this system. It follows that there are many cases for which victim information is not recorded. As a result, it is not possible to match data on the sex of victims against data on the sex of defendants.

10 . Domestic violence remedy orders

The Ministry of Justice are responsible for collating and publishing data from the family courts, which include orders to prevent domestic violence.

Two types of domestic violence remedy order can be granted by the family courts:

- a non-molestation order, which can either prohibit particular behaviour or general molestation by someone who has previously been violent towards the applicant and/or any relevant children
- an occupation order, which can define or regulate rights of occupation of the home by the parties involved

Since the year ending March 2010¹, the number of non-molestation applications decreased from 20,274 to a low of 16,094 in the year ending March 2012. Since then the numbers have been increasing. There were 20,405 applications in the year ending March 2018, a similar level to the year ending March 2010. The number of non-molestation orders made has increased by 16% over the last eight years to 26,332 in the year ending March 2018² ([Appendix Table 35](#)).

In contrast, the number of occupation applications made has declined by over one-third (36%), from 7,250 applications in the year ending March 2010 to 4,629 applications in the year ending March 2018. The number of orders made decreased by 47% from 4,348 orders in the year ending March 2010 to 2,308 in the year ending March 2018.

The majority of applicants for domestic violence remedy orders were female; 93% of non-molestation orders and 87% of occupation orders in the year ending March 2018³ ([Appendix Table 36](#)).

Breaches of non-molestation orders made by the family courts are classified as a criminal offence. There were 34 cautions and 2,996 defendants prosecuted for breaches of non-molestation orders in the year ending December 2017. There were 3,154 offenders convicted of breaches of non-molestation orders and 3,122 offenders were sentenced for this offence ([Appendix Table 34](#)).

Notes for: Domestic violence remedy orders

1. The year ending March 2010 is the earliest date for which financial year family court data are available.
2. It is not possible to compare across applications and orders, because they do not refer to the same cohort of cases.
3. This percentage excludes applicants with an unknown gender from the calculation.

11 . Domestic abuse-related offences – specific crime types

Home Office Homicide Index

Data on domestic homicides have been extracted from the Home Office Homicide Index, which contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales. It is continually updated with revised information from the police and the courts and, as such, is a richer source of data than the main recorded crime dataset¹.

“Domestic” homicides from the Homicide Index include any homicide where the relationship between an adult victim (aged 16 years and over) and the perpetrator falls into one of the following categories:

- spouse
- common-law spouse
- cohabiting partner
- boyfriend or girlfriend
- ex-spouse, ex-cohabiting partner or ex-boyfriend or girlfriend
- adulterous relationship
- son or daughter (including step and adopted relationships)
- parent (including step and adopted relationships)
- brother or sister
- other relatives

These data exclude homicides where the victim was aged under 16 years, to be consistent with the government definition of domestic abuse used elsewhere in this bulletin.

Homicide Index data are based on the year when the offence was recorded, not when the offence took place or when the case was heard in court. While in the vast majority of cases the offence will be recorded in the same year as it took place, this is not always the case. The data refer to the position as at 14 November 2017, when the Homicide Index database was “frozen” for the purpose of analysis². The data may change as subsequent court hearings take place or as other information is received.

As there is year-to-year variability in the volume of homicides recorded, this analysis combines data for a three-year period (April 2014 to March 2017) to provide more robust results. The analysis shows:

- there were a total of 400 domestic homicides recorded by the police in England and Wales between April 2014 and March 2017; this represents 25% of all homicides where the victim was aged 16 years and over during this time period (see [Appendix Table 14](#))
- the majority of victims of domestic homicides were female (73%, or 293), with 27% of victims being male (107); this contrasts with victims of non-domestic homicides, where the majority of victims were male (88%, or 730) and 12% of victims were female (103, see [Appendix Table 15](#))
- four in five female victims of domestic homicide were killed by a partner or ex-partner (239, 82%); of which the majority of the suspects were male (238)
- of these 239 females, 103 were killed by a spouse or civil partner, 49 were killed by their common-law spouse or cohabiting partner, 40 were killed by a boyfriend or girlfriend and 25 were killed by an ex-spouse, ex-common law spouse or ex-cohabiting partner
- only 3% of female victims (8) were killed by a female, five of which were killed by other family members, such as siblings and other relatives (Table 3, see [Appendix Table 17](#))
- 6 in 10 male victims of domestic homicide (61%) were killed by another male (Table 3, see [Appendix Table 17](#)); a higher proportion of male victims were killed by a family member³ than females (58% compared with 18% respectively)
- around half (42%) of male victims were killed by a partner or ex-partner (7 male suspects and 38 female suspects)

Table 3: Relationship of victim to suspect in domestic homicides, by type of relationship and sex, combined data for year ending March 2015 to year ending March 2017¹
England and Wales

	Victims domestic homicides		
	Male	Female	All
Male Suspects	65	283	348
Partner/ex-partner ²	7	238	245
Parent	30	25	55
Son/daughter	2	5	7
Other family ³	26	15	41
Female Suspects	42	8	50
Partner/ex-partner ²	38	1	39
Parent	3	1	4
Son/daughter	0	1	1
Other family ³	1	5	6
All Suspects	107	293	400
Partner/ex-partner ²	45	239	284
Parent	33	26	59
Son/daughter	2	6	8
Other family ³	27	20	47

Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

Notes

1. As at 16 November 2017; figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts or as further information becomes available. [Back to table](#)
2. Partner/ex-partner includes the sub-categories "spouse, cohabiting partner, boyfriend/girlfriend, ex-spouse /ex-cohabiting partner/ex-boyfriend/girlfriend and adulterous relationship". [Back to table](#)
3. Includes siblings, other relatives. [Back to table](#)
4. Includes 2 homicides with no suspect details. [Back to table](#)

Data on the number of domestic homicides by sex can be broken down by police force area but there is considerable volatility in these numbers over time due to the relatively low volumes involved. See [Appendix Tables 14 and 15](#) for more information.

It was not possible to extract data on domestic abuse-related femicides⁴ from the Femicide Census for this year's publication, but these data will be available in future versions of the release.

Stalking and harassment flagged as domestic abuse

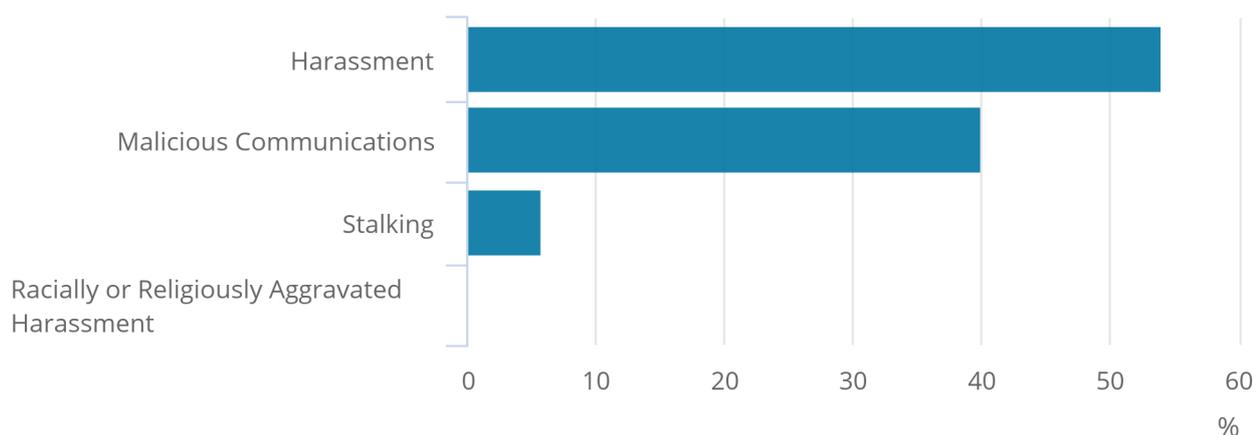
The police recorded 106,905 domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences in the year ending March 2018, accounting for just under one-fifth (18%) of all domestic abuse-related offences. Over half of these offences were harassment (54%, 57,840) and 40% were malicious communications (Figure 14). The 2017 report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services, [Living in fear – the police and CPS response to harassment and stalking \(PDF, 957.7KB\)](#), highlights issues with police forces not recording offences of stalking and harassment cases accurately. HMICFRS found that some stalking and harassment reported to the police were not recorded at all and when incidents were recorded as crimes, stalking was often misidentified as harassment.

Figure 14: Proportion of stalking and harassment offences recorded by the police that were flagged as domestic abuse-related, by offence

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales

Figure 14: Proportion of stalking and harassment offences recorded by the police that were flagged as domestic abuse-related, by offence

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Stalking and harassment offences include harassment, malicious communications, racially or religiously aggravated harassment and stalking.

Domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences made up over one-third of all stalking and harassment recorded by the police in the year ending March 2018 (36%, see [Appendix Table 13](#)). This proportion varied by Police Force Area, for more information please see the [Domestic abuse statistics – data tool](#).

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Case Information System recorded a total of 29,528 cases of domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment that came to a first hearing at a magistrates' court in the year ending March 2018, accounting for 84% of all cases. Domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment cases made up a large proportion (over 60%) of all types of cases heard at a magistrates' court. Of all harassment cases resulting from a breach of a restraining order on conviction, 87% were flagged as domestic abuse-related (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Proportion of stalking and harassment cases that reached a first hearing at a magistrates' court that were flagged as domestic abuse-related, by type of offence

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales

Figure 15: Proportion of stalking and harassment cases that reached a first hearing at a magistrates' court that were flagged as domestic abuse-related, by type of offence

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales



Source: Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

Notes:

1. CPS data is not designated as official statistics.

The National Stalking Helpline

The [National Stalking Helpline](#) provides advice and guidance to individuals experiencing stalking, their family or friends, and professionals supporting them and is run by the [Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#). In the year ending March 2018, the National Stalking Helpline responded to a total of 4,659 contacts in this period, and of those 727 confirmed their stalker was an ex-partner or family member. Data available from the National Stalking Helpline can provide an indication of the profile of individuals contacting the helpline who have experienced stalking in a domestic relationship, by either an ex-partner or a family member (see [Appendix Table 73](#)). Excluding cases where data were not known:

- the majority of callers to the helpline who experienced stalking by an ex-partner or family member were female (80%)
- while around three-quarters of the callers identified themselves as White (74%), 14% chose not to disclose their ethnicity
- one-third of callers identified themselves as Christian (33%)
- 12% of callers reported that they had a disability, with 15% choosing not to disclose their disability information
- the majority of callers identified as heterosexual (80%), with 3% reporting that they were gay or lesbian
- over three-quarters of callers to the helpline who said they experienced stalking in or after a domestic relationship reported that their stalker was male (78%)
- the vast majority of callers reported that they were being stalked by their ex-partner (95%)
- the most common types of stalking behaviours reported by callers to the stalking helpline were unwanted texts (48%), phone calls (41%) and visits to the caller's house or workplace (37%)

Coercive and controlling behaviour

The rise in domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police includes offences of coercive or controlling behaviour in an intimate or family relationship⁵. This became a specific criminal offence as part of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and came into force on 29 December 2015. There were a total of 9,053 offences of coercive control that were recorded by the police in the year ending March 2018.

The number of these offences that have been recorded by the police has increased over the last year. This is common for new offences and the rise could be attributed to a growing awareness by the police, CPS, other agencies and members of the public of how to recognise such criminality in society and to use the new law accordingly.

The CPS Case Information System recorded 960 offences of coercive and controlling behaviour where a prosecution commenced at magistrates' courts in the year ending March 2018. This is a three-fold increase from 309 in the year ending March 2017 (see [Appendix Table 32](#)).

Since coercive and controlling behaviour is now a specific offence, criminal justice outcomes data on this offence are now available from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). There were a total of 468⁶ defendants prosecuted for coercive and controlling behaviour and eight cautions in the year ending December 2017. There were 235 offenders convicted of coercive and controlling behaviour and 223 offenders were sentenced for this offence⁷ (see [Appendix Table 33](#)). The number of defendants prosecuted, convicted and sentenced for coercive and controlling behaviour within this time period was much higher in volume than the year ending December 2016. The majority of defendants prosecuted for coercive and controlling behaviour were male (97%) and the average custodial sentence given was 17 months.

The number of prosecutions of coercive and controlling behaviour were quite evenly split regardless of whether the prosecution was the principal offence or the non-principal offence. Offences where coercive and controlling behaviour was the principal offence accounted for 51% of all coercive and controlling behaviour prosecutions (468 cases).

Convictions where the coercive and controlling behaviour was the principal offence accounted for a higher proportion of total convictions than where coercive and controlling behaviour was the non-principal offence (71% compared with 29% respectively).

Table 4: Prosecutions and convictions of coercive and controlling behaviour, by principal and non-principal offence and sex of defendant, year ending December 2017

England and Wales

	Number of prosecutions			
	Male	Female	Unknown	All
Principal offence	454	9	5	468
Non-principal offence	429	9	5	443
Total	883	18	10	911
	Number of convictions			
	Male	Female	Unknown	All
Principal offence	233	1	1	235
Non-principal offence	91	4	0	95
Total	324	5	1	330

Source: Ministry of Justice

Notes

1. These data are classified as experimental statistics. [Back to table](#)

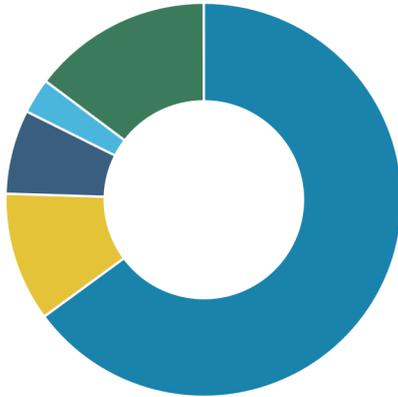
Criminal court data are primarily published on a principal offences basis, meaning that where proceedings involve more than one offence, the principal offence is reported. For the first time, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) have published experimental data that show the offences for which defendants were prosecuted alongside their principal offence. Almost two-thirds of the prosecutions where coercive and controlling behaviour was the principal offence had the additional non-principal offence of common assault and battery (65%, Figure 16).

Figure 16: Proportion of non-principal offences prosecuted alongside the principal offence of coercive and controlling behaviour

Year ending December 2017, England and Wales

Figure 16: Proportion of non-principal offences prosecuted alongside the principal offence of coercive and controlling behaviour

Year ending December 2017, England and Wales



Source: Ministry of Justice

Notes:

1. These data are classified as experimental statistics.

MoJ data refer to a different time period to prosecutions data published by the CPS and relate to the outcomes for offenders of coercive and controlling behaviour, rather than offences heard at a magistrates' court⁸. As a result, data from the CPS and MoJ are not directly comparable.

As with CPS data, there can be a delay between the commencement of new offences and cases coming through to court, primarily as a result of the time it takes for an offence to be investigated, the police to assign an outcome, the prosecution, and to result in a completed court case.

Notes for: Domestic abuse-related offences – specific crime types

1. For example, when the police initially record an offence as a homicide it remains classified as such unless the police or courts decide that a lesser offence, or no offence, took place. The offence would be reclassified on the Homicide Index as “no longer recorded” but remain in the main police recorded crime collection as a homicide.
2. The Homicide Index is continually updated with revised information from the police as investigations continue and as cases are heard by the courts. The version used for analysis does not accept updates after it is “frozen” to ensure the data do not change during the analysis period. See Section 3.1 of the [User guide to crime statistics](#) for more information.
3. 58 male victims were killed by a male family member and 4 were killed by a female family member.
4. Femicide is defined as the killing of a woman or girl, in particular by a man and on account of her gender. Domestic femicides recorded by the Femicide Census refer to femicides where the woman was killed by a partner, ex-partner, family member, or in the cases of "IPV collateral" by the partner or ex-partner of a relative or friend of the victim. Mercy killings, assisted suicides or suicide pacts, and honour killings involving these relationships between victims and perpetrators are also included in domestic femicides, but are identified separately.
5. This offence is constituted by behaviour on the part of the perpetrator, which takes place “repeatedly or continuously”. The victim and alleged perpetrator must be “personally connected” at the time the behaviour takes place. The behaviour must have had a “serious effect” on the victim, meaning that it has caused the victim to fear violence will be used against them on “at least two occasions”, or it has had a “substantial adverse effect on the victims’ day-to-day activities”. The alleged perpetrator must have known that their behaviour would have a serious effect on the victim, or the behaviour must have been such that he or she “ought to have known” it would have that effect.
6. These data relate to defendants for whom engaging in controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.
7. 125 offenders were given an immediate custodial sentence, 63 were given a suspended sentence, 28 were given a community sentence and two were issued a conditional discharge.
8. A defendant who appears before both magistrates’ court and Crown Court may not do so within the same year, meaning for a given year convictions may exceed prosecutions or sentences may not equal convictions. Defendants who appear before both courts may be convicted at the Crown Court for a different offence to that for which they were originally proceeded against at magistrates’ court.

12 . Services available to victims of domestic abuse

This section presents data on the provision of domestic abuse services in England and Wales collected and held by the charities [Women’s Aid Federation of England](#), [Welsh Women’s Aid](#), [National Domestic Violence Helpline](#), [run in partnership between Women’s Aid and Refuge](#), [Live Fear Free Helpline](#), [run by Welsh Women’s Aid and funded by Welsh Government](#), [The Mankind Initiative](#), [SafeLives](#) and [Victim Support](#). These data are sourced from non-governmental, administrative datasets and are not classified as official statistics.

Women’s Aid Annual Survey

Women’s Aid Federation of England distribute an [annual online survey](#) to all domestic abuse services for female victims in England listed on the [Routes to Support](#) database, comprising both refuge services and community-based services. These include counselling, support groups, local helplines, floating support, Domestic Abuse Prevention Advocate (DAPA) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) services.

The survey collects information on service-users' needs, experiences and demographic information, as well as data on the services they use and the numbers of referrals accepted and declined by services. Welsh Women's Aid conducts a separate data collection covering domestic abuse service provision in Wales. At the end of each quarter during the reporting period, Welsh Women's Aid collect a range of data from member organisations. This includes the number of clients supported and referred in that period, support needs of service users, types of abuse experienced by clients, locality and demographics.

The data from these sources provide valuable insight into the domestic abuse services that responded, but it is not known how these findings compare with those for the services that did not respond. It is therefore unclear whether these findings are representative of all domestic abuse services in England and Wales. The survey for England includes questions covering the previous financial year and a census day and week:

- for the year ending March 2017 survey, the latest year for which data are currently available, the England annual survey was sent to 224 organisations running 365 domestic abuse service entries on Routes to Support (the UK violence against women and girls service directory)
- responses for the latest financial year were received from 95 organisations running 154 refuge services and 75 organisations running 131 community-based services in England
- the census day for refuge services was 4 July 2017 and 105 organisations running 168 refuge services in England responded to this part of the survey
- the census week for community-based services ran from 3 to 7 July 2017 inclusively and 82 organisations running 139 community-based services in England¹ responded

Data for Wales for the year ending March 2017 include information from 29 specialist domestic abuse services (run by 24 organisations) offering refuge-based support, floating support services and community outreach services. Whilst the Women's Aid Federation of England Annual Survey covers referrals of only women and children to domestic abuse services, Welsh Women's Aid also collect some data on referrals of men (see [Appendix Table 39](#)). For comparative purposes, the data presented in this section refer to referrals of women only.

Table 5 outlines the number of referrals made to refuge and community-based services in England and Wales:

- the survey results show there were 19,764 referrals to 154 refuge services in England (services responding to this question) in the year ending March 2017, of which 49% were declined and 11% were not accepted by the client
- of those declined, around one-third (32%) were declined because there was no space or capacity to support the victim (see [Appendix Table 40a](#) for more detail)
- around one-third (32%) of the 2,481 referrals of women to 29 refuge services in Wales were declined according to the Welsh Women's Aid survey, with an additional 332 referrals (13%) not being accepted by the client (see [Appendix Table 39](#))
- of those referrals to refuges that were declined, 31% were declined due to a lack of space to support the client (see [Appendix Table 40b](#))

Table 5: Referrals of women to refuge and community-based services in England and Wales, year ending March 2017

England and Wales

	England Wales	
	Number	
Refuges		
Referrals	19,764	2,481
Accepted	7,480	1,351
Declined	9,638	796
Support not accepted by client	2,229	332
Missing data	417	:
Community-based services		
Referrals	96,225	7,365
Accepted	71,676	5,801
Declined	14,546	163
Support not accepted by client	8,100	1,098
Missing data	1,903	:

Source: Women's Aid Annual Survey, Women's Aid Federation of England and Welsh Women's Aid

Notes

1. Data from Women's Aid Federation of England and Welsh Women's Aid are not classified as official statistics. [Back to table](#)
2. Data for England and Wales are presented separately because they are sourced from two different data collections. [Back to table](#)
3. These figures cannot provide a full picture of demand for refuge services. Some survivors may not disclose abuse and some may not have been referred to a refuge because referring agencies may already be aware that a refuge is full or cannot meet their needs. [Back to table](#)
4. These data only refer to services that responded to the survey, and it is not known how these results compare with the services not included in the survey. Data on refuges in England are based on 95 organisations, running 154 refuge services and 75 organisations running 131 community-based services. Data from Wales are based on 24 organisations running 29 specialist Domestic Abuse services. [Back to table](#)
5. Numbers of referrals accepted or declined for Wales will not sum to the total due to missing data and extended referral periods. Missing data for England refers to where it is not known if the referrals were accepted or declined. [Back to table](#)
6. : Denotes not available . [Back to table](#)

There are likely to be many victims of domestic abuse that do not become visible to these services and are therefore not reflected in these figures. For example, there are likely to be victims who needed refuge support but did not disclose the abuse they were experiencing. In addition, some victims may not have been referred to specialist services. This could be because referring agencies did not identify a victim's need for refuge support, or they already knew the refuge was full or could not meet the victim's specific needs ².

Availability of refuge spaces would also be subject to whether the service can support the specific needs of the person being referred to that space. It may be that a service is unable to support victims with complex needs in their refuge or that they have a limit on the number of victims with complex needs they can support at one time. Furthermore, there are limitations on the number of beds available in each space, which will limit a victim's options depending on the number of children seeking refuge with them.

The census day for the Women's Aid Annual Survey provides more detailed information on the women using refuge services in England who responded to this section of the survey. Data are presented for Wales where they are available. The data show:

- on the census day in 2017, there were 105 responding services³ providing refuge to 2,182 women (see [Appendix Table 41](#)); 62% had children staying with them in the refuge (see [Appendix Table 42](#))
- over 4 in 10 women in refuges in England on the census day had had the abuse reported to the police (44%) and 17% had had a criminal case made against the perpetrator (see [Appendix Table 43](#))⁴
- over two-thirds (68%, 1,493) of the 2,182 women using refuge services on the census day had crossed local authority boundaries to access refuge in England (see [Appendix Table 42](#))
- just over half of clients in Wales (53%) came from either another local authority in Wales or across the UK (see [Appendix Table 44](#))

Compared with refuge services, a lower proportion of referrals to the 75 community-based services that responded to this question in England were declined in the year ending March 2017 (15%) and 2% were declined in Wales (Table 5). Of those referrals that were declined in England, the most common reasons for declining the service were not being able to contact the client (51%) and the client not wanting support (36%, see [Appendix Table 40a](#))⁵.

The victim's decision to accept support on domestic abuse can be a very difficult one: the victim may feel shame about telling someone else about their relationship, they may fear that the perpetrator will find out, or may not feel emotionally ready to seek support. The victim may also have been referred inappropriately, without the victim's consent or knowledge.

The census week for the Women's Aid Annual Survey provides more detailed information on the women using community-based services in England who responded to this section of the survey. Data are presented for Wales where they are available. The data show:

- the 82 community-based services in England who completed the census week section of the survey were supporting 12,175 women (see [Appendix Table 41](#)); over half of these women (59%) had children (see [Appendix Table 42](#))
- over one-quarter (28%) of women using community-based services in England had had the abuse reported to the police and 13% had had a criminal case made against the perpetrator⁶ (see [Appendix Table 43](#))

Routes to Support

[Routes to Support \(formerly UKRefugesOnline – UKROL\)](#) is a UK-wide online database, which contains information about domestic abuse and other violence against women services that are available for women and children throughout the UK. The database is representative of all domestic abuse services for women and is supported and part-funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The database is jointly managed by Women's Aid organisations⁷ across the UK.

Routes to Support is a secure database and its primary purpose is to operate as a referral tool for the domestic abuse services sector. The data are obtained directly from the services listed on the system in the form of an initial questionnaire when they register and this is followed by an annual update form, which every service must complete to provide information about changes to provision. Data are further updated on an ongoing basis as Women's Aid are made aware of changes and as new services are set up or take over tenders.

Routes to Support provides [snapshot figures](#) gathered on one day each year on the different types of domestic abuse services⁸ available in England and Wales:

- these are a range of services providing different types and levels of support, including the provision of information, therapeutic interventions, advocacy and accommodation-based support
- there were 302 refuge services recorded by Routes to Support in England and Wales in 2018; 269 in England⁹ and 33 in Wales ([Appendix Table 46](#))
- according to the snapshot figures captured once a year, refuge services in England¹⁰ have reduced in numbers over the last eight years, from 294 services in 2010 to 269 in 2018 (see [Appendix Table 45](#))

There are likely to have been fluctuations in numbers between these dates as services open, close or change providers as part of the commissioning process. In some instances, provision is commissioned for a wider area than under the previous contract, leading to one service replacing multiple services whilst retaining the provision.

This can account for a decrease in refuge service numbers alongside an increase in refuge bed spaces during the same period. Routes to Support collects data on the number of bed spaces¹¹ available in refuges in England and Wales, compared with a recommended number of bed spaces¹²:

- the number of bed spaces available in refuges in England¹³ has increased since 2010 from 3,467 to 3,813 spaces in 2018 (see [Appendix Table 47](#))
- data on bed spaces in Wales are available from 2017 onwards, where the number of bed spaces decreased from 296 to 279 spaces in 2018; once these are added to the England figures, the total number of available bed spaces in refuges shows no change from 2017 (see [Appendix Table 47](#))

These figures do not provide information on which specific access and support needs these services are able to support. Refuges can vary in size and some cannot support some specific groups of people, for example, those with high-level mental health needs or physical disabilities. Services can vary according to the different types and levels of support that they provide.

The number of bed spaces in England and Wales also vary geographically. The number of refuge bed spaces available per 1,000 estimated female victims of domestic abuse has been calculated so that comparisons can be made across regions in England and Wales. The estimated number of female victims of domestic abuse is based on respondents aged 16 to 59 years who completed the self-completion module of the Crime Survey for England and Wales in the year ending March 2018.

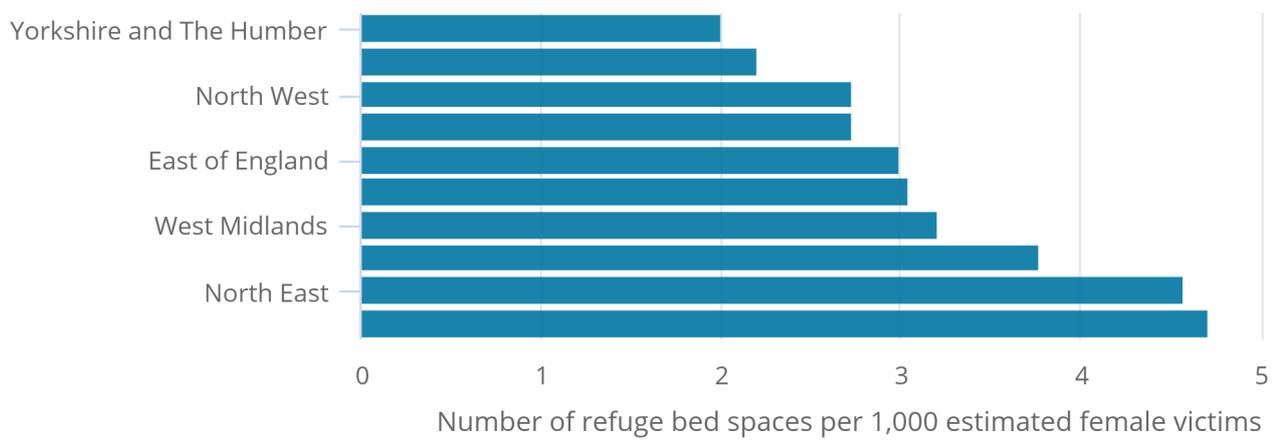
The number of bed spaces available ranged from two bed spaces per 1,000 estimated female victims to five bed spaces per 1,000 estimated female victims of domestic abuse (Figure 17). This analysis cannot fully indicate whether the supply of refuge bed spaces is meeting demand, as many victims of domestic abuse will not become visible to domestic abuse service providers, and not every victim will require access to a refuge bed space.

Figure 17: Number of refuge bed spaces per 1,000 estimated female victims of domestic abuse by region

2018, England and Wales

Figure 17: Number of refuge bed spaces per 1,000 estimated female victims of domestic abuse by region

2018, England and Wales



Source: Women's Aid Federation of England, 2018 and Welsh Women's Aid - data from Routes to Support, the UK violence against women and girls service directory

Notes:

1. Data from Women's Aid Federation for England and Welsh Women's Aid are not classified as official statistics.
2. Data on refuge bed spaces are snapshot figures gathered on one day each year. These figures do not provide information on which specific access and support needs these services are able to support, for example, some services will not be able to support women with drug and/or alcohol dependency support needs.
3. These data exclude services in the Channel Islands and those that are UK wide.
4. The number of refuge bed spaces per 1,000 estimated female victims of domestic abuse has been calculated using estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales year ending March 2018.

In addition to providing data on the number of services available, Routes to Support has provided additional vacancy data from refuge services in London as part of a project with London Councils, including information on the migration of women seeking refuge from domestic abuse in the capital. Over half of women (55%) moved from another London borough to access refuge services in the year ending March 2018, and around one-fifth (19%) moved from outside London (Table 6). This broadly corresponds to data from the [Women's Aid Annual Survey 2017](#), which shows that 68% of women moved across local authority boundaries in England to seek refuge.

Table 6: Borough of origin of women accessing refuge services in London, year ending March 2018

London

	Number	Percentage
Own borough	34	3
Other borough	661	55
Unknown London borough	80	7
Outside London	229	19
Unknown	200	17
Missing	0	0
Total	1,204	100

Source: Women's Aid Federation of England, 2018 - data from Routes to Support, the UK violence against women and girls service directory

Notes

1. Data from Women's Aid Federation of England are not classified as official statistics. [Back to table](#)

Routes to Support also collects snapshot data on an annual basis for other domestic abuse services in England and Wales¹⁴ (see [Appendix Table 45](#)). Helpline services in England and Wales have increased by 14% in the last year (from 132 in 2017 to 151 services in 2018). The number of dedicated domestic abuse services available in England and Wales for children and young people has increased slightly since 2017 from 210 to 219 services in 2018.

Domestic abuse helplines

The Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline, run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge, is a national service for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf. Welsh Women's Aid offer an equivalent service in the Live Fear Free Helpline, funded by the Welsh Government. Live Fear Free is primarily a helpline for those suffering with domestic abuse and sexual violence, but calls can be made regarding any form of violence against women and the caller will be referred to a service in their area. Data from these helplines show:

- one-third of calls to the National Domestic Violence Helpline were made by either current or historical survivors of domestic abuse (31,056 out of a total of 94,549 calls, [Appendix Table 49](#))
- similarly, 39% of calls to the Live Fear Free Helpline were from survivors (7,086 out of 33,008 calls, [Appendix Table 51](#))
- around half (45%) of survivors calling the National Domestic Violence Helpline were referred to a domestic or sexual violence service, and 36% of survivors who called the Live Fear Free Helpline were referred to other agencies offering a range of services including money matters, child contact services and alcohol and substance misuse services ([Appendix Tables 50 and 52](#))
- while 22% of survivors who called the Live Fear Free Helpline were referred to the police in the year ending March 2018, this was the case for only 8% of survivors calling the National Domestic Violence Helpline ([Appendix Tables 50 and 52](#))

Services for male domestic abuse victims

Data on domestic abuse services mainly cover female victims. However, data on services available for male victims have been supplied for the first time from [The ManKind Initiative](#), who support male victims of domestic abuse through a range of services.

The ManKind Initiative operate a confidential helpline available for all men across the UK suffering from domestic abuse by their current or former wife or partner (including same-sex partner). Data from the helpline are collected through a list of questions that are designed to support a structured response to the caller, help guide the caller through explaining their experiences and help the charity understand the types of domestic abuse experienced by the victim. These questions do not take precedence over the conversation that the victim requires, therefore, for the year ending March 2018, 82% of callers have answers recorded against them (1,072 out of a total of 1,301 calls made by victims).

Of the 1,816 calls made to the helpline in the year ending March 2018, almost three-quarters (72%) were callers that identified as male victims of domestic abuse and 28% were calling on behalf of the victim ([Appendix Table 57](#)). Just over 70% of victims were signposted to information, 93% were signposted to other services and 97% were offered emotional support ([Appendix Table 58](#)).

The majority of victims calling the helpline experienced emotional abuse (95%), almost two-thirds suffered physical abuse (64%) and one-fifth said they experienced financial abuse. The majority of victims (95%) reported to the helpline operator that the perpetrator was a female partner or ex-partner ([Appendix Table 59](#)).

The ManKind Initiative also maintain a service directory that covers providers of services for men. In April 2018, there were 235 domestic abuse organisations offering support to male victims in England and Wales. For more detail on the types of services available to men in different regions, refer to [Appendix Table 60](#).

Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs)

An Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) is a professionally qualified, specialist domestic abuse worker, who supports domestic abuse victims at high risk¹⁵ from murder or serious harm.

SafeLives operate a specialist outcomes measurement programme, [Insights](#), which is a tool that allows for the collection and analysis of frontline support information. IDVAs complete an Insights form throughout the support period, capturing important demographic data and details of the abuse being experienced, and tracking any changes to those experiences over time.

Victim Support is one of the largest single IDVA providers in England and Wales. They also collate data on referrals to IDVA services ([Appendix Table 53](#)).

The [Insights dataset](#) for the year ending March 2018 contains 2,591 unique individual cases at intake and 2,142 matched cases at exit¹⁶, drawn from 21 IDVA services across England and Wales that used the SafeLives Insights outcome measurement service. Just under one-fifth (18%) of cases were repeat cases at intake (see [Appendix Table 61](#))¹⁷.

According to Insights, the most common referral route to an IDVA service was the police (61%), followed by self-referrals (13%, Table 7). A similar pattern was recorded under the Victim Support IDVA dataset, with 64% of cases referred by the police and 6% self-referred (Table 7). Fewer referrals to IDVA services were made by health services and other universal¹⁸ domestic violence services.

Table 7: Referral routes to Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) in England and Wales, year ending March 2018

England and Wales

	Insights	Victim Support
	Percentage	
Police	61	64
Self-referrals	13	6
Multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC)	6	1
Domestic violence and sexual violence services	6	2
Health services	5	5
Children and young people services	5	2
Housing	1	0
Specialist services	1	2
Other	2	18
Not recorded	:	0

Source: Insights IDVA dataset, SafeLives and IDVA dataset, Victim Support

Notes

1. Insights IDVA data and Victim Support data are not classified as official statistics. [Back to table](#)
2. Data may not sum to 100 due to rounding. [Back to table](#)
3. These questions were mandatory on the Insights IDVA form. [Back to table](#)

The pattern of referrals to IDVA services corresponds to clients' use of public services in the last 12 months, with around three-quarters of clients reporting the abuse to the police in the year ending March 2018 (78%, see [Appendix Table 64](#)). This proportion is much higher than victims of partner abuse recorded by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), where only 17% reported their experiences to the police in the year ending March 2018 survey. It is expected that many victims of domestic abuse at high risk of murder or serious harm (and who use IDVA services) would report their experiences to the police, however, the CSEW figure covers victims of all types of abuse. As these victims reported by the survey may be experiencing varying levels of risk, the proportion that report to the police will be lower than of those covered by IDVA services. This is compared with just over half of IDVA clients visiting a GP for any reason (54%) and lower proportions of clients attending A&E as a result of the abuse (19%), or using other specialist domestic violence services (25%).

Over 90% of clients using IDVA services had experienced domestic abuse from an intimate partner, ex-partner or intermittent intimate partner (see [Appendix Table 64](#)). This can be compared with 76% of victims of domestic abuse who said they experienced partner abuse in the last year, according to the year ending March 2018 CSEW.

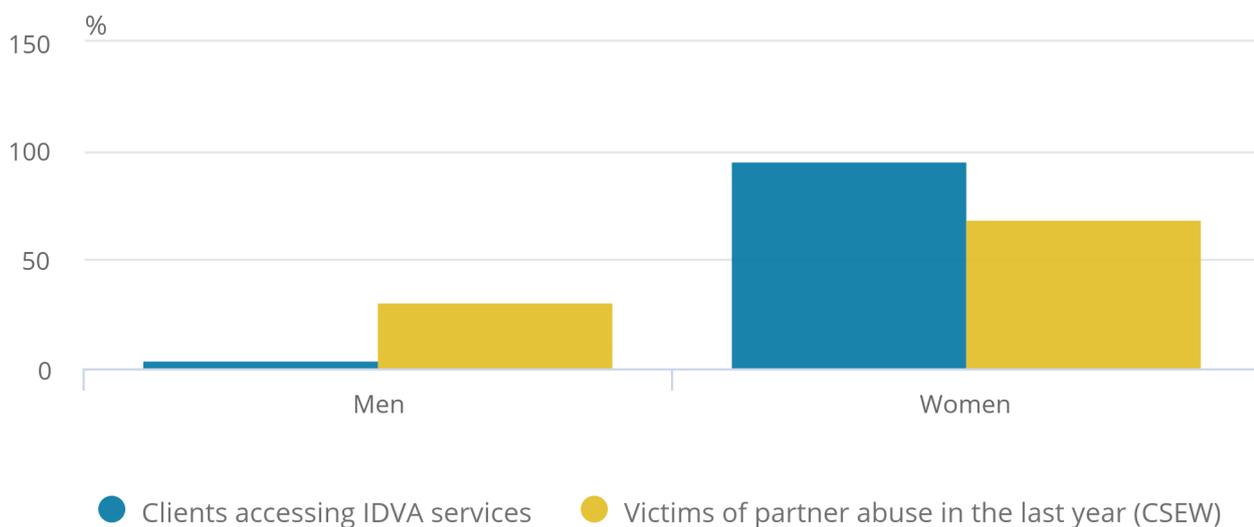
Insights also collects information on the personal characteristics of clients entering IDVA services, which can be compared with CSEW data on the characteristics of respondents aged 16 to 59 years who said they experienced partner abuse¹⁹ in the last year (see [Appendix Tables 4 and 63](#))²⁰. The vast majority of clients accessing IDVA services in the year ending March 2018 were women (96%), whereas a lower proportion of adults who reported experiencing partner abuse in the last year in the CSEW were women (69%, Figure 18). This suggests that female victims are more likely to use IDVA services than male victims.

Figure 18: Sex of clients accessing Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) services and sex of victims of partner abuse in the last year

Year ending March 2018, Insights IDVA data and Crime Survey for England and Wales

Figure 18: Sex of clients accessing Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) services and sex of victims of partner abuse in the last year

Year ending March 2018, Insights IDVA data and Crime Survey for England and Wales



Source: Insights Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) dataset, SafeLives and Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Notes:

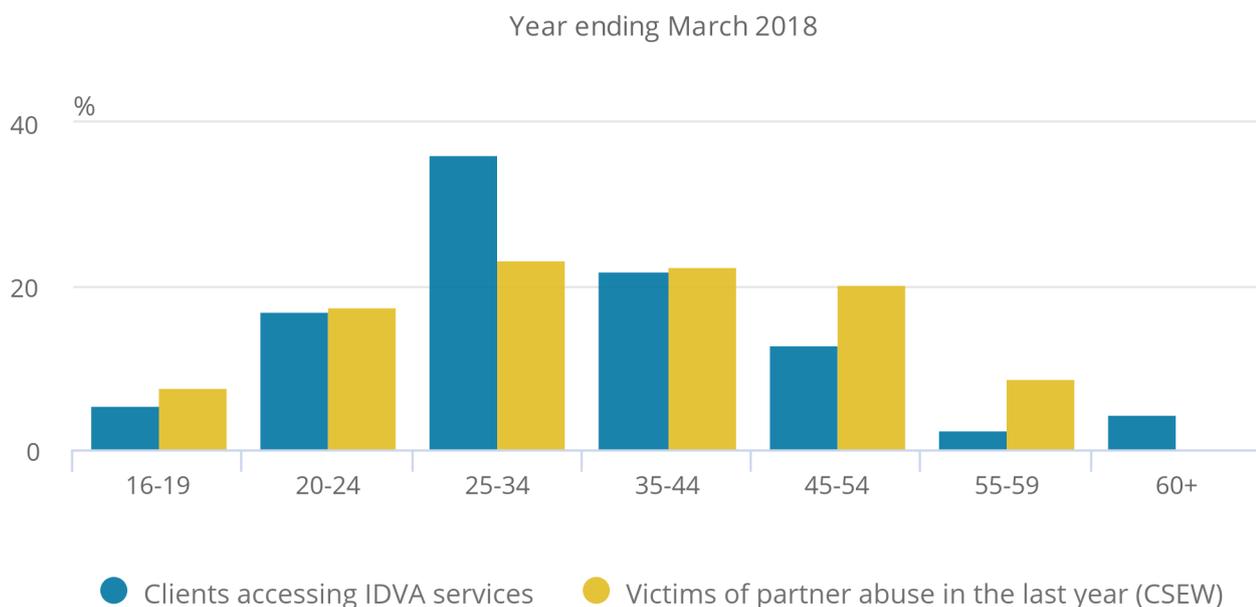
1. Insights IDVA data are not classified as official statistics.
2. CSEW data are based on respondents aged 16 to 59 years who reported experience of partner abuse in the last year.

The age profile of clients accessing IDVA services was broadly similar to the age breakdown of victims of partner abuse in the last year, as reported in the CSEW²¹. Three-quarters (75%) of clients accessing IDVA services were aged 20 to 44 years compared with 63% of CSEW respondents who were victims of partner abuse in the last year (Figure 19). Lower proportions of people accessing IDVA services were in the older age categories (aged 45 to 59 years) compared with respondents reporting experience of partner abuse in the CSEW (15% compared with 29% respectively).

Figure 19: Ages of clients accessing Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) services and ages of Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) victims of partner abuse in the last year

Year ending March 2018

Figure 19: Ages of clients accessing Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) services and ages of Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) victims of partner abuse in the last year



Source: Insights Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) dataset, SafeLives and Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Insights IDVA data are not classified as official statistics.
2. CSEW data are based on respondents aged 16 to 59 years who reported experience of partner abuse in the last year.

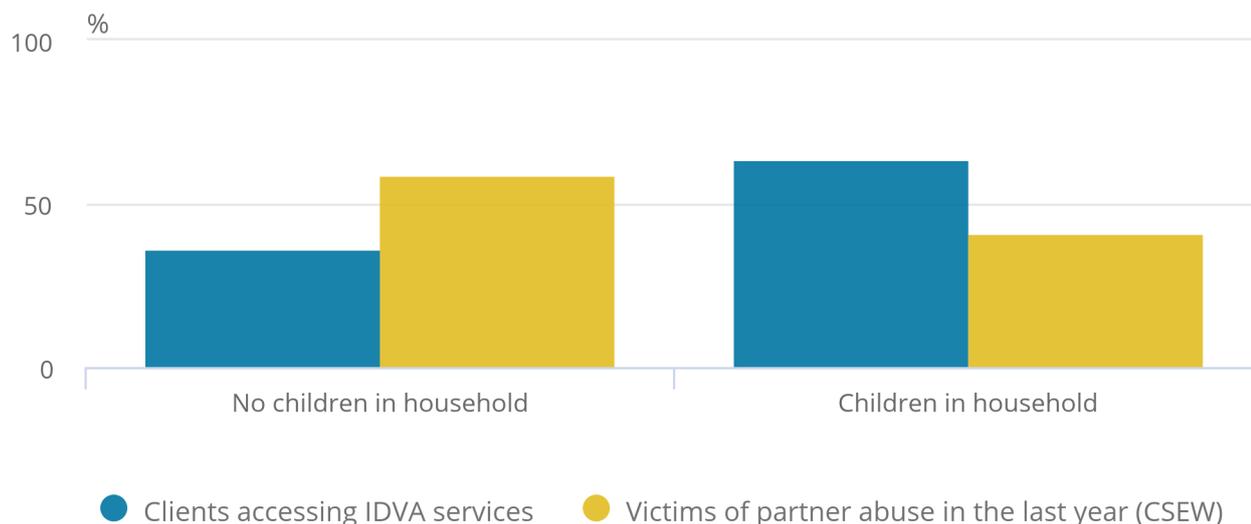
Almost two-thirds (64%) of clients accessing IDVA services had children living in their household at the time, whereas under half of respondents (41%) who said they experienced partner abuse in the last year in the CSEW had children living in the household (Figure 20). This suggests that victims who have children living in their household are more likely to access support services than those who do not.

Figure 20: Whether children are living in the household of Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) clients or in the household of CSEW victims of partner abuse

Year ending March 2018, Insights IDVA data and Crime Survey for England and Wales

Figure 20: Whether children are living in the household of Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) clients or in the household of CSEW victims of partner abuse

Year ending March 2018, Insights IDVA data and Crime Survey for England and Wales



Source: Insights Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) dataset, SafeLives and Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Insights IDVA data are not classified as official statistics.
2. CSEW data are based on respondents aged 16 to 59 years who reported experience of partner abuse in the last year.

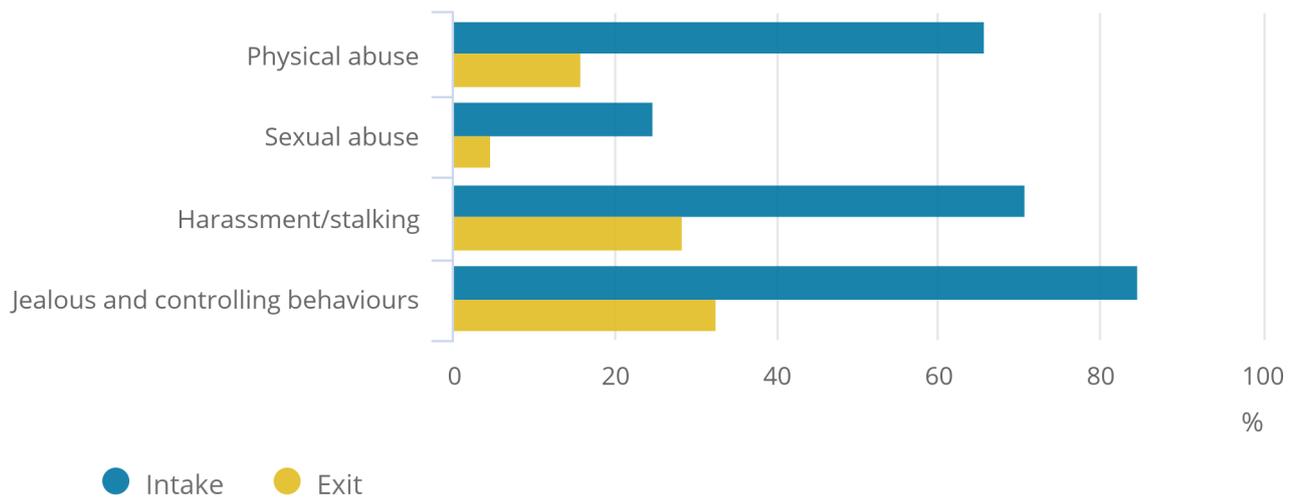
The Insights dataset records the profile of abuse experienced by IDVA clients at intake and at exit of the service. For every type of abuse, the experience of abuse decreased following exit from IDVA services (Figure 21). In particular, the proportions of clients experiencing physical abuse and jealous or controlling behaviour following exit decreased by 50 percentage points and 52 percentage points respectively.

Figure 21: Profile of abuse experienced by Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) clients at intake compared with exit

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales

Figure 21: Profile of abuse experienced by Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) clients at intake compared with exit

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales



Source: Insights Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) dataset, SafeLives

Notes:

1. Insights IDVA data are not classified as official statistics.
2. These data are based on clients exiting IDVA services. There will be some clients who have intake forms submitted within the reporting period, but are still accessing services and therefore are not included in the exit data.

The majority of IDVA clients were not living with their perpetrator on exit of the service (85%, see [Appendix Table 65](#)). This is an increase from the sample taken at entry to IDVA services, where 71% were not living with their perpetrator (see [Appendix Table 64](#)). Despite not living together, one-third of clients (33%) reported ongoing contact with their perpetrator, with the most common reason for this being child contact issues (63%, see [Appendix Table 65](#)).

Domestic abuse practitioners

Since 2014, SafeLives has counted the number of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), to identify how many IDVAs are supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse across England and Wales.

According to the [latest practitioner survey](#) in 2017, there were 897 full-time equivalent IDVAs working in England and Wales, of which 782 were IDVAs for victims at high risk from domestic abuse. This compares with a recommended 1,059 IDVAs, equating to a 74% coverage in England and Wales. The number of full-time equivalent IDVAs varied by region. London was the only area that had sufficient coverage for its victims at high risk from domestic abuse, with 147 IDVAs against 141 recommended IDVAs ([Appendix Table 71](#)).

In 2017 the survey was extended to cover all types of domestic abuse practitioners including IDVAs, ISVAs (Independent Sexual Violence Advisors), outreach workers, refuge workers, young people’s specialists, children’s support workers and perpetrator workers. In England and Wales, the 2017 survey recorded a total of 2,609 domestic abuse practitioners. One-third of these were full-time equivalent IDVA workers, and just over one-quarter were outreach workers (Table 8).

Whilst SafeLives did not receive a response from all domestic abuse services and did not contact all statutory bodies who may provide domestic abuse services, the survey provides the clearest picture of domestic abuse practitioner provision across England and Wales to date. The vast majority of perpetrator case workers work within statutory bodies and are not reflected in these data.

Table 8: Domestic abuse full-time equivalent (FTE) practitioners in England and Wales, by support type, 2017
England and Wales

	Number	Percentage
IDVAs - all risk levels	897	34.4
Outreach workers	691	26.5
Refuge workers	452	17.3
Independent Sexual Violence Advisors	165	6.3
Young Person’s Violence Advisor	182	7.0
Children’s Support Workers	150	5.7
Perpetrator Case Workers	73	2.8
Total domestic abuse practitioners	2,609	100

Source: SafeLives Practitioner Survey, 2017

Notes

1. SafeLives data are not classified as official statistics. [Back to table](#)

Multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs)

A multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, IDVAs, probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors. After sharing all relevant information they have about the circumstances for a particular victim, the representatives discuss options for increasing the safety of that victim and turn these into a coordinated action plan. The primary focus of the MARAC is to safeguard the adult victim but it is also a forum for highlighting risk posed to linked individuals by the same perpetrator(s). Both those linked individuals and the perpetrator(s) should be the subject of similar coordinated planning either at the MARAC or at linked forums that safeguard children and manage the behaviour of the perpetrator.

At the centre of a MARAC is the working assumption that no single agency or individual can see the complete picture of the life of a victim, but all may have insights that are crucial to their safety. The victim does not attend the meeting but is represented by an IDVA who advocates on their behalf and holds statutory agencies to account.

SafeLives are responsible for collecting data from every MARAC in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and from some MARACs in Scotland. The collection of MARAC data began in 2004, and since 2010 a national overview of MARACs covering England and Wales has been available.

There were 256 MARACs in England and Wales in the year ending March 2018 (Table 9). All MARACs fall within police force area boundaries, but police force areas can have more than one MARAC, depending on the size of the area and structure of the local authorities. This means that MARACs vary in size.

There were 88,461 cases discussed at MARACs in England and Wales in the year ending March 2018. This equates to 38 cases discussed per 10,000 adult females²², which falls just below the recommended²³ number of 40 cases discussed per 10,000 adult females (Table 9). This could suggest that not enough high-risk domestic abuse cases are being referred to a MARAC, or that some have been dealt with in another forum. For example, some areas will have a “pre-MARAC” meeting such as a Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), so not all high-risk cases identified will make it to a MARAC meeting.

The number of cases per 10,000 adult females discussed at MARACs varied by police force area.

Table 9: Cases discussed at multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs), year ending March 2018

England and Wales

	Number
Number of MARACs	256
Number of cases discussed	88,461
Recommended number of cases discussed	93,220
Number of cases discussed per 10,000 adult females	38
Recommended number of cases per 10,000 adult females	40

Source: SafeLives

Notes

1. Data from SafeLives are not classified as official statistics. [Back to table](#)

Victims at high risk from domestic abuse discussed at MARACs vary by their personal characteristics. Of the 86,360 cases²⁴ discussed at MARACs in England and Wales, 5% involved a male victim ([Appendix Table 69](#)). Under one-fifth of cases discussed at MARACs involved a black or minority ethnic victim (17%), 6% of victims had a disability and 1% identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). The small proportions of domestic abuse victims with these characteristics becoming visible in the MARAC data demonstrates the disparities in service provision for these groups. Small proportions may also reflect low levels of identification and recording of these characteristics. The proportion of domestic abuse victims discussed at MARACs who were recorded as having these characteristics varied considerably by police force area (see [Appendix Tables 69 and 70](#) for more information).

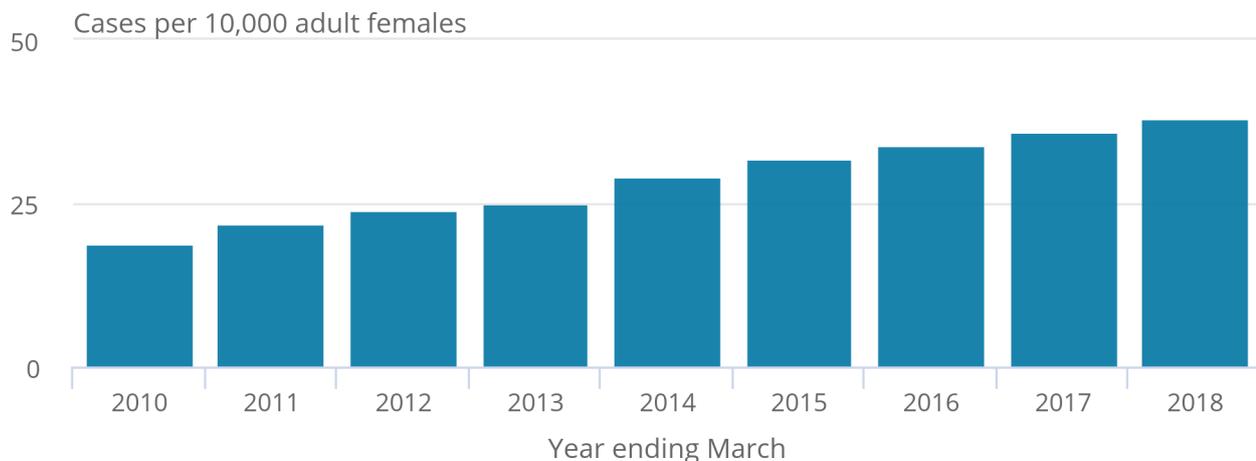
The number of cases discussed at MARACs has doubled since the year ending March 2010, from 19 per 10,000 adult females to 38 per 10,000 adult females (Figure 22). This is likely to reflect better identification by police and other statutory and non-statutory agencies of high-risk domestic abuse victims rather than an increase in prevalence, due to the recent decline in prevalence shown by the CSEW.

Figure 22: Number of cases per 10,000 adult females discussed at multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs)

Year ending March 2010 to year ending March 2018, England and Wales

Figure 22: Number of cases per 10,000 adult females discussed at multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs)

Year ending March 2010 to year ending March 2018, England and Wales



Source: SafeLives

Notes:

1. Data from SafeLives are not classified as official statistics.
2. The population data are from the 2011 Census.
3. The increase in the number of cases does not automatically translate into an increase in domestic abuse, only an increase in its reporting.

Victims of domestic abuse cannot self-refer to a MARAC, they are always referred by an agency such as the police or health workers. Two-thirds of MARAC cases were referred by the police in the year ending March 2018 (66%, Figure 23). The police should complete a domestic abuse, stalking and harassment and honour-based violence (DASH) risk assessment (consisting of approximately 25 questions) at any domestic abuse incident they attend. Alongside professional judgement and expertise from the police, this risk assessment will determine whether a referral should be made to a MARAC²⁵, and additionally signs of potential escalation should also lead to a MARAC referral.

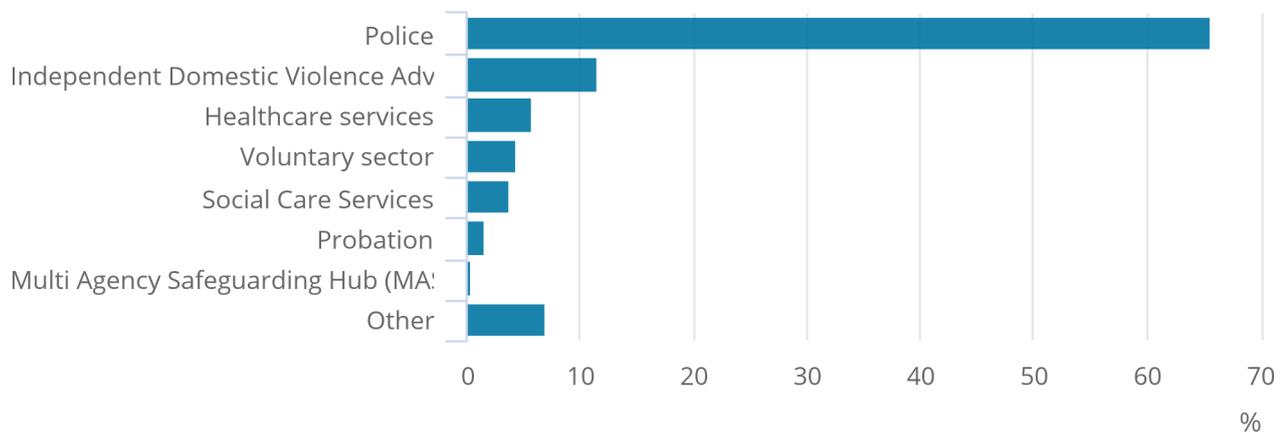
However, not all MARAC cases are reported to the police, because the victim may not want the police to be involved. There will also be some police domestic abuse-related incidents that will have been referred to a MARAC by somebody else. Like the police, other agencies such as health and housing will use a DASH risk assessment, alongside their professional judgement and expertise, to determine whether a referral should be made to a MARAC when they identify domestic abuse. Consequently, it is not possible to calculate the percentage of police domestic abuse-related incidents that resulted in MARAC referrals. Low referrals from other agencies are a cause of significant concern, given how few people report their experiences to the police (as shown by the CSEW²⁶). The proportion of MARAC referrals sourced from the police varies across police force areas.

Figure 23: Sources of referrals to multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs)

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales

Figure 23: Sources of referrals to multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs)

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales



Source: SafeLives

Notes:

1. Data from SafeLives are not classified as official statistics.
2. The number of MARAC referrals by each source are not presented as whole numbers, because the referral can be made by more than one service.
3. 'Other' refers to education, housing, or another agency.
4. Healthcare services consist of referrals from a primary care service, a secondary service or acute trust, mental health or substance abuse services.
5. Social care services consist of referrals from adult social care or children's social care.

Over one-quarter of cases discussed at MARACs across England and Wales were repeat cases (28%, see [Appendix Table 67](#)). A repeat MARAC case is one which has been previously referred to a MARAC and within the 12 months following the date of the last referral, a further incident is identified. Any agency may identify this further incident regardless of whether it has been reported to the police²⁷. Incidents that occur more than 12 months after the last MARAC referral do not constitute a repeat incident but instead would constitute a new referral to a MARAC. The proportion of repeat cases discussed at MARACs varies across police forces.

There were a total of 114,427 children in households where a case was referred to a MARAC in the year ending March 2018 (see [Appendix Table 67](#)). The presence of children in these cases is defined differently across MARACs. For example, some MARACs state that a child was present in the household at the time of the abuse and others state that the child witnessed the domestic abuse. As a result, these figures should be treated with caution.

Multi-crime services

As well as specialist domestic abuse services offered to high- and medium-risk victims, multi-crime services (commissioned by Police and Crime Commissioners) also offer support to victims of domestic abuse. Victim Support run both specialist domestic abuse services and these wider multi-crime services, that pick up lower risk level domestic abuse cases and cases where victims do not wish to engage with specialist organisations.

Data on multi-crime service cases flagged as domestic abuse-related are collated by Victim Support.

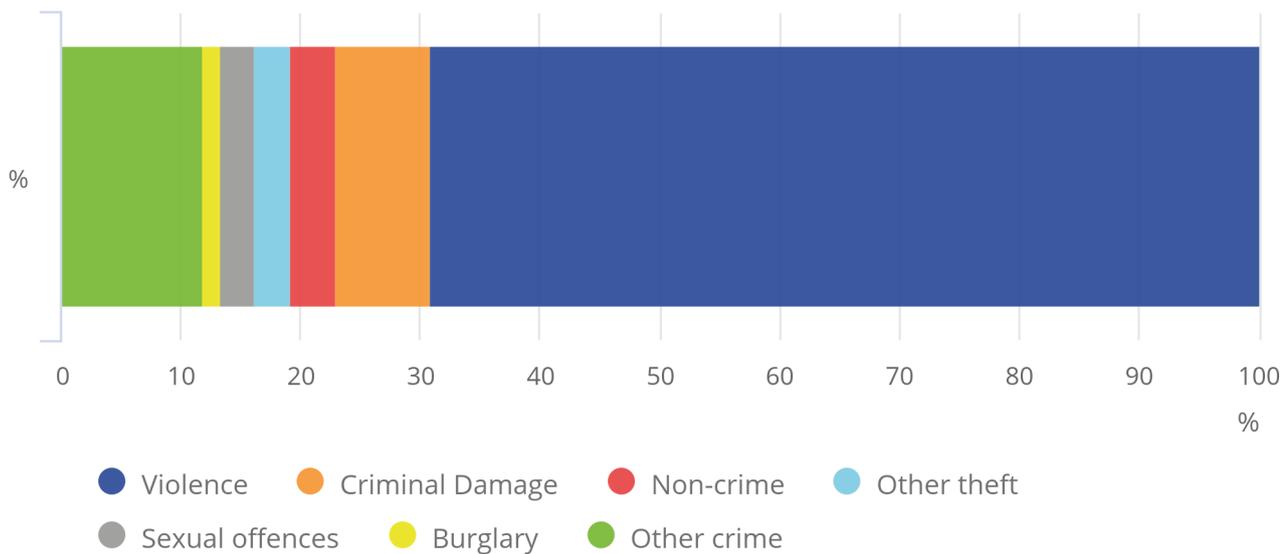
Multi-crime service cases disaggregated by crime type show that over two-thirds (69%) of valid cases flagged as domestic abuse-related were for violence against the person in the year ending March 2018 (Figure 24). This corresponds to police recorded crime figures, where violence against the person offences make up the majority of domestic abuse-related crimes dealt with by the police (77%).

Figure 24: Multi-crime service cases flagged as domestic abuse-related, broken down by crime category

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales

Figure 24: Multi-crime service cases flagged as domestic abuse-related, broken down by crime category

Year ending March 2018, England and Wales



Source: Victim Support

Notes:

1. Victim support data are not classified as official statistics.
2. Valid cases refer to cases excluding those with the following statuses: duplicate case; consent not received within desired timescale; incorrect or insufficient contact information; safe phone contact data not provided for domestic violence and hate crime referrals; cancelled; consent to contact denied; does not meet contract criteria; insufficient crime details; living outside of VS area or abroad; other agency.

In just over one-fifth of valid cases flagged as domestic abuse-related, the victim was male (21%, [Appendix Table 55](#)). This contrasts to the sex breakdown of victims accessing specialist domestic abuse services such as IDVAs and MARACs, where a much smaller proportion of victims were male (4% and 5% respectively).

This could indicate that male victims are less likely to seek out, be aware of or engage with specialist domestic abuse services, or are not signposted to specialist domestic abuse services. Male victims are also deemed less likely to be eligible for these types of support in terms of their risk level, and are therefore dealt with through multi-crime services. The majority of valid multi-crime service cases flagged as domestic abuse-related were referred by the police (95%, [Appendix Table 56](#)).

Notes for: Services available to victims of domestic abuse

1. For more information, refer to the methodology appendix of Women's Aid [Domestic Abuse Report 2017](#).

2. The online referral database Routes to Support shows which vacancies are available. Services with access are able to use the detailed search functionality to find vacancies that are available for individual women depending on their support needs, number of children and any geographical need. In the same way, they are also able to see where refuges are full or no suitable vacancies exist.
3. Services responding to the Day to Count part of the annual survey.
4. These data are not available for Wales.
5. Reasons for declining community-based services were not available for Wales.
6. These data are not available for Wales.
7. Women's Aid Federation of England, Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland, Scottish Women's Aid and Welsh Women's Aid.
8. These data do not reflect the quality of services offered and the staff available to operate these services.
9. This figure excludes services in the Channel Islands and those that are UK wide.
10. Data for Wales are only available from 2017 onwards. These figures exclude services in the Channel Islands and those that are UK wide.
11. A bed space is defined as one unit of accommodation for a woman or a woman and her children. Bed spaces can vary in size and the numbers of children they can accommodate.
12. The recommended number of refuge vacancies is based on a report from the [Council of Europe Task Force to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence \(PDF, 1.2MB\)](#).
13. A time series of these data is not available for Wales.
14. A time series of these data is not available for Wales prior to 2017.
15. Victims at high risk are determined using the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour-based Violence (DASH) Risk Identification Checklist, professional judgement and where repeat incidents are occurring.
16. The number of cases in the IDVA dataset has decreased from 6,287 cases at intake and 5,177 exit forms in the year ending March 2016. This is because fewer services were using Insights in the year ending March 2018 compared with previous years. This is due to migration to a new Insights system and has not had an impact on the findings of the IDVA dataset, as they have remained similar over time.
17. Cases are deemed repeats if the client has returned to the service after their case was previously closed (or made inactive).
18. Services available to all members of the public on behalf of the state, such as health, adult and children's social care, and housing.
19. Data on IDVA clients are compared with the number of victims of partner abuse rather than domestic abuse as a whole because the majority of clients using IDVA services experienced abuse from a partner or ex-partner.
20. Some characteristics are not directly comparable between data sources due to differing coverage.
21. IDVA data include clients aged 60 years and over, which could have a small impact on the comparison with CSEW data, which only include data on victims aged 16 to 59 years.
22. This figure is based on the adult female population because it is mainly female victims referred to a MARAC, and SafeLives' recommendations are built on analysis of female victims.
23. This recommended figure is built from analysis of female victims based on [Domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey](#), published in 2004.

24. This figure is slightly smaller than the England and Wales figure, because Sussex could not provide a sex breakdown of cases.
25. A score of 14 or more will result in a MARAC referral.
26. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) during the year ending March 2018 estimated that 83% of partner abuse victims did not report their experiences to the police.
27. A further incident includes any one of the following types of behaviour, which, if reported to the police, would constitute criminal behaviour: violence or threats of violence to the victim (including threats against property); or, a pattern of stalking or harassment; or rape or sexual abuse. Where a repeat victim is identified by any MARAC agency, that agency should refer the case to the MARAC, regardless of whether the behaviour experienced by the victim meets the local referral threshold. To identify repeat victims of domestic abuse regardless of to whom it is reported, all MARAC agencies should have the capacity to flag their files following the latest referral so that they are aware if a service user experiences a repeat incident.

13 . Future work and ongoing development

This annual publication is part of a project to bring together statistics on domestic abuse across England and Wales to create a more coherent picture of how victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse interact with the criminal justice system and support services. User feedback has been obtained during the development of this release through discussions with domestic abuse organisations, police force staff and police and crime commissioners.

It is expected that the next publication (due to be released in late 2019) will include all the data presented in this publication updated for the latest year and will continue to fill gaps in domestic abuse data by looking at new data sources and expanding detail on data such as demographics of victims.

If you have any feedback on this release, or any suggestions relating to the next publication, please contact the Crime Statistics and Analysis Team at Office for National Statistics (ONS) via email at crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk.

14 . Quality and methodology

For Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data and police recorded crime data, the [Crime statistics Quality and Methodology Information report](#) contains important information on:

- the strengths and limitations of the data and how it compares with related data
- uses and users of the data
- how the output was created
- the quality of the output including the accuracy of the data

More information regarding the coverage, coherence and accuracy of the CSEW and police recorded crime can also be found in the [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#) and (for CSEW only) the [CSEW technical report](#).

A separate [Domestic abuse in England and Wales Quality and Methodology Information report](#) provides detail on individual data sources included in this publication.

15 . Annex 1: Stages of the criminal justice process

The first recorded stage in the criminal justice process begins when a victim or someone else reports an incident of domestic abuse to the police. The police will record a report of domestic abuse as an incident and must then assess whether or not an offence has been committed in accordance with the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS)¹.

If it is concluded that a crime did not take place, the domestic abuse incident remains recorded as an incident. If an offence has been committed, the incident will be recorded as a crime and will be identified as being domestic abuse-related. If it is clear when the incident is reported that an offence has occurred, the police may record the incident as a domestic abuse-related crime immediately without first recording the incident as a starting point.

The police then start an investigation to collect all evidence relevant to the case and identify a suspect. In April 2014 a new outcomes framework² was introduced for police, with an emphasis on transparency on how all crimes recorded by them are dealt with. Following investigation, one of the following will occur:

- the police charge a suspect with an offence relating to domestic abuse following a decision by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)
- during the investigation, the victim (for a wide variety of reasons) may decide not to support the police in their enquiries; although this often means that it is more difficult for any further action to be taken by the police, evidence-led prosecutions are an option considered by the police and may be taken up by the CPS – even in cases where a victim is unwilling to appear in court as a witness this does not necessarily prevent the suspect being subject to a trial
- exceptionally – the police may issue the suspect with a caution
- after further investigation, the police decide that a crime has not taken place; leading to the crime report being cancelled
- after further investigation, it becomes apparent the offence took place in another police force area; this would lead to a crime being transferred to that police force for the investigation to be continued³
- the police decide, sometimes following early investigative advice, from the CPS, that there is not enough evidence to take the case forward and take no further action
- the police investigate and decide on no further action without referral to the CPS
- the investigation does not identify a suspect (this is very rare for domestic abuse cases)⁴

During the investigation, the victim (for a wide variety of reasons) may decide not to support the police in their enquiries. Although this often means that it is more difficult for any further action to be taken by the police, the case will continue to be progressed if possible and therefore the outcome of such cases varies.

In cases where the victim does not support a police investigation or prosecution but maintains that the crime took place, the offence remains recorded. In such cases, the police may suggest ways the victim can seek support through the criminal justice process, or from specialist support agencies or organisations, which may then enable the victim to support the prosecution. Where the victim still does not support the investigation or prosecution, the police and the CPS will review all the other evidence in the case to determine if the case can continue without the evidence of the victim. Where the [Code for Crown Prosecutors](#) is still satisfied, the crime will proceed to court.

To support a victim through the trial process the CPS can ask the court to allow a victim or a witness in the case to use a variety of "special measures". These can include giving evidence behind screens or from another room or location using a video link. Where the case is reliant on the evidence of the victim, the CPS may ask the court to compel the witness to attend court by issuing a witness summons. However, this will only occur after the police have carried out a full risk assessment and detailed enquires have been made with any specialist support agencies who are providing assistance to the victim. Another example of when the police may be unable to pursue an investigation is where the offender has died before the case could be investigated or prosecuted.

The police can request advice from the CPS on domestic abuse cases before referring them to the CPS for charging⁵. The police may make a request for informal advice without submitting a file, which can take place in person or over the telephone. Informal advice is sought if the matter is straightforward and does not require the formal submission of papers. Such advice would be generic, on general points of law and not case specific. An appropriate audit trail is required for any case specific enquiries and advice that the police may take in investigating a case.

The police may also seek early investigative advice. In particular, the [Director's Guidance on Charging](#) (fifth edition) notes that:

"Prosecutors may provide guidance and advice in serious, sensitive or complex cases and any case where a police supervisor considers it would be of assistance in helping to determine the evidence that will be required to support a prosecution or to decide if a case can proceed to court."

The CPS is the principal prosecuting authority for England and Wales, acting independently in criminal cases investigated by the police and others. Specifically with regard to domestic abuse, the CPS:

- can advise the police during the early stages of investigations in more serious or complex cases
- decides which cases should be prosecuted after the cases have been referred to them by the police
- prepares cases and presents them at court – using a range of in-house advocates, self-employed advocates or agents in court
- provides information, assistance and support to victims and prosecution witnesses including, where appropriate, by applying to the court for restraining orders to reduce the risk faced by victims of crime and their dependants

The [Code for Crown Prosecutors](#) sets out the principles to be followed by Crown Prosecutors when they make case decisions. The CPS does not determine guilt – that is a matter for the court to decide on the facts of a case as presented to the court. The CPS aims to build the strongest possible cases on the available evidence to assist the jury in this task.

Police referrals to the CPS for a decision whether to charge a suspect are sometimes referred to as a request for a Pre-Charge Decision, and are the most frequent interaction between the police and the CPS. In some circumstances, a case referred to the CPS may require further evidence to be obtained before a charge decision can be made. If this is the case, the Prosecutor will advise the officer of the further material required to obtain a charging decision, by way of a targeted and specific action plan.

Where the police believe that a domestic abuse case could proceed to charge, the decision to charge is made by the CPS and not the police. The [Code for Crown Prosecutors](#) sets out the conditions that must be met for a prosecution to take place⁶. There are two stages to this: the evidential stage and the public interest stage. The evidential stage requires that the CPS must be satisfied that there is enough evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction against each defendant on each charge.

The finding that there is a realistic prospect of conviction is based on the Prosecutor's objective assessment of the evidence. It means that an objective, impartial and reasonable jury, bench of magistrates or judge hearing a case alone, properly directed and acting in accordance with the law, is more likely than not to convict the defendant of the charge alleged. This is a different test from that applied by the criminal courts; a court may only convict if it is sure that the defendant is guilty.

In every case where there is sufficient evidence to justify a prosecution, prosecutors must go on to consider whether a prosecution is required in the public interest. A prosecution will usually take place unless the Prosecutor is satisfied that there are public interest factors tending against prosecution, which outweigh those tending in favour. In the case of domestic abuse, it will be rare for the public interest stage not to be met.

In circumstances where a victim is not willing to support a prosecution, when considering public interest, prosecutors will give careful consideration to a number of factors. This can include the seriousness of the offence, the interests and safety of the victim, other family members and any children or other dependants, culpability of the defendant and any other factors that may present as relevant to public interest.

If there is insufficient evidence the case cannot continue regardless of how serious it is. The CPS review every case they receive from the police. Review is a continuous process and prosecutors must take account of any change in circumstances that occurs as the case develops, including what becomes known of the defence case.

Where circumstances have changed, sometimes there is no longer a realistic prospect of conviction and in those circumstances a case may be discontinued – in other words, stopped from proceeding further. If the defendant pleads guilty or is found guilty by a jury, they will be sentenced by the judge or by the magistrates.

Notes for: Annex 1: Stages of the criminal justice process

1. An example of a domestic abuse incident that does not amount to a crime would be two people having a loud argument, a third party calls the police, the police attend and calm the situation down, but no crime has taken place.
2. See section 1.2 of [Crime Outcomes in England and Wales, year ending March 2018](#).
3. There are strict guidelines to which the police must adhere to in order to transfer or cancel a crime report (please refer to the [Home Office Counting Rules](#) for further information).
4. In the year ending March 2018, this outcome applied to only 2% of cases.
5. For more information, see [CPS Relations with the Police](#).
6. Additional information and support for prosecutors to enable them to make decisions in cases involving domestic abuse can be found in [Domestic Abuse Guidelines for Prosecutors](#).

16 . Annex 2: Glossary

Administratively finalised: Cases where the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has not made a charging decision on a case brought to them by the police. The next stage of the process would be for the police to undertake more investigations or to complete an action plan provided by the CPS. At any stage in the investigation (prior to a charging decision being given) the police may decide that the case does not meet charging criteria and end the investigation without returning to the CPS for further consultation. As a result, the CPS will administratively finalise the case because no actual charging decision has been made by them. It also includes cases where a suspect has died before charges had been authorised or where a suspect has failed to answer police bail.

Arrest: The taking or keeping of a person in custody by legal authority, especially in response to a criminal charge.

Bail: The temporary release of an accused person awaiting trial.

Charged: Cases where the Crown Prosecution Service's decision was to charge.

Coercive and controlling behaviour: Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is a continuing act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Combined incident and crime data: Domestic abuse police incidents and domestic abuse-related crimes combined, providing the total demand on police. This is used in the report to calculate a combined incident and crime rate for domestic abuse and the proportion of domestic abuse incidents that were recorded as crimes.

Convictions: Cases where the defendant was convicted following a prosecution, comprising:

- conviction after trial: cases in which the defendant pleaded not guilty, but was convicted after the evidence is heard
- guilty plea: where the defendant pleaded guilty
- proof in absence: cases comprising of lesser offences which were heard by the court in the absence of the defendant

Domestic abuse-related crimes: Incidents of domestic abuse that resulted in a crime being recorded by the police and are included in police recorded crime. These can also be referred to as domestic abuse-related offences. Domestic abuse-related crimes can be added to domestic abuse incidents to create a total picture of the demand that domestic abuse puts on the police.

Domestic abuse police incidents: Incidents of domestic abuse that were reported to the police, but following investigation, do not amount to a crime or offence according to the National Crime Recording Standards. These can be added to domestic abuse-related crimes to create a total picture of the demand that domestic abuse puts on the police.

Domestic homicides: Any homicide where the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator falls into one of the following categories:

- spouse
- cohabiting partner
- boyfriend or girlfriend
- ex-spouse, ex-cohabiting partner or ex-boyfriend or girlfriend
- adulterous relationship
- lover's spouse
- son or daughter or parent (including step and adopted relationships)
- brother or sister
- other relatives

Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme or Clare's Law (DVDS): These schemes give members of the public a formal mechanism to make enquiries about an individual who they are in a relationship with, or who is in a relationship with someone they know, where there is a concern that the individual may be violent towards their partner. The scheme has two routes:

- "right to ask" – this enables someone to ask the police about a partner's previous history of domestic violence or violent acts; a precedent for such a scheme exists with the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme
- "right to know" – the police can proactively disclose information in prescribed circumstances

Domestic Violence Protection Notice (DVPN): The initial notice issued by the police to provide emergency protection to an individual believed to be the victim of domestic violence. This notice, which must be authorised by a police superintendent, contains prohibitions that effectively prevent the suspected perpetrator from returning to the victim's home or otherwise contacting the victim.

Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO): This response can prevent the perpetrator from returning to a residence and from having contact with the victim for up to 28 days.

Femicide: The killing of a woman or girl, in particular by a man and on account of her gender.

Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs): An IDVA is a professionally qualified, specialist domestic abuse worker, who supports high-risk victims of domestic abuse. High-risk cases are determined using the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour-Based Violence (DASH) Risk Identification Checklist, professional judgement and where repeat incidents are occurring.

Multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs): A MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on the highest-risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors, probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

No prosecution: Those cases where the Crown Prosecution Service's decision was not to prosecute, for evidential or public interest reasons.

Other pre-charge decision: Cases where the outcome of the charging decision has not been recorded or is undefined.

Out of court disposal: Cases where a caution, conditional caution, reprimand or final warning has been given or where the offence has been taken into consideration in relation to other charges.

Police outcomes: These data are based on the full outcomes framework¹ introduced in April 2014. This new outcomes framework allows every crime recorded by the police to be given a detailed outcome, showing how the police deal with crimes (including crimes that are still under investigation).

Pre-charge decisions: The decisions made by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on referrals from the police. The charging data cover those cases, by suspect, forwarded to the CPS during the year for charging decisions and are not directly comparable in numbers with the prosecutions data that cover cases, by defendant, finalised during the year.

Prevalence rate: The percentage of people aged 16 to 59 years who reported they had experienced any form of domestic abuse in the last year in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). This prevalence rate is used to produce estimates for the number of victims of domestic abuse, as reported in the CSEW.

Prosecutions: All cases where the defendant(s) were charged, summonsed in court, or charged by way of a postal requisition during the period, including those proceeding to a trial or guilty plea, those discontinued and those which could not proceed.

Reasons for unsuccessful outcomes: An unsuccessful outcome comprises the following:

- victim evidence does not support case: the evidence of the victim of an offence did not support the prosecution of the defendant, leading to an unsuccessful outcome, but the victim, however, did not retract (the “reason title” was amended in April 2013 to “the evidence of the victim does not come up to proof, but there is no retraction”)
- victim non-attendance: the victim was called as a witness in a trial, but failed to attend court
- victim retraction: where the evidence of the victim supported the prosecution case, but the victim refused to be called as a witness, or retracted, or withdrew a complaint
- caution: the defendant is charged with a criminal offence, but it is subsequently decided that a caution is more suitable than prosecution
- bindover: the defendant is charged with a criminal offence, but agrees to be bound over; this does not include persons who are bound over for a breach of the peace Section 115 Magistrates’ Courts Act 1980 where there are no other criminal proceedings
- acquittals after trial: the defendant was found not guilty by the magistrates or jury after a contested hearing in which the defence was called on to present its case (cases dismissed, no case to answer or judge directed acquittals are not included)
- conflict of evidence: conflict of prosecution evidence (from April 2013 the guidance was amended to clarify that this reason is not to be used when the victim retracts, does not attend or their evidence does not come up to proof)
- essential legal element missing: essential legal element missing (the “reason title” was amended in April 2013 to “incorrect charging decision – legal element missing”; the updated guidance made it clear that this reason is not to be used when the victim retracts, does not attend or their evidence does not come up to proof)
- unreliable witness: unreliable witness or witnesses (The “reason title” was amended in April 2013 to “key witness (non-victim) refuses to give evidence/retracts/not up to proof” to provide clarity)

Unsuccessful outcomes: The outcomes of all completed prosecutions where the defendant was not convicted, comprising the following:

- discontinued and withdrawn: cases where consideration of the evidence and of the public interest led the Crown Prosecution Service to discontinue proceedings at any time before the start of the trial – included here are cases formally discontinued in advance of the hearing, those in which no evidence was offered and those withdrawn at court; also included are cases in which the defendant was bound over to keep the peace
- dismissed after full trial: cases in which the defendant pleaded not guilty and proceedings were dismissed by the magistrates after hearing the defence case
- judge directed acquittal: cases where at the close of the prosecution case against the defendant, a successful submission of “no case” or “unsafe” was made on behalf of the defendant, and the judge directed an acquittal rather than allowed the case to be determined by the jury
- jury acquittal: cases where the defendant pleaded not guilty and, following a trial, was acquitted by the jury
- all other unsuccessful outcomes: comprising of cases resulting in administrative finalisations, discharged committals and no case to answer outcomes
- administrative finalisation: administrative finalisations are recorded where a case cannot proceed because a warrant for the arrest of the defendant remains unexecuted, or where the defendant cannot be traced by the police for a summons to be served, or the defendant has died or been found unfit to plead
- discharged committals: committal proceedings in which the defendant is discharged; following a discharge a case can be reinstated
- no case to answer: cases in which the defendant pleaded not guilty and prosecution evidence is heard, but proceedings were dismissed by the magistrates without hearing the defence case

Voluntary attendance: Voluntary attendances act as an alternative to arrest where the suspect attends a police station voluntarily to assist with investigation.

Notes for: Annex 2: Glossary

1. See section 1.2 of [Crime Outcomes in England and Wales, year ending March 2018](#) for more information.