

Article

# Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2023

Characteristics of victims of domestic abuse based on findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and police recorded crime.

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Release date:  
24 November 2023

Next release:  
To be announced

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# 1 . Other pages in this release

- [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2023](#)
- [Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2023](#)
- [Partner abuse in detail, England and Wales: year ending March 2023](#)
- [Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system, England and Wales: November 2023](#)
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- [Redevelopment of domestic abuse statistics: research update November 2023](#)

## 2 . Main points

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2023 shows the following trends.

- An estimated 1.4 million women and 751,000 men aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the last year; a prevalence rate of approximately 5.7% of women and 3.2% of men.
- The percentage of people aged 75 years and over who experienced domestic abuse in the last year was lower than all other age groups.
- A lower proportion of women in London experienced any domestic abuse in the last year (1.8%) compared with all other regions (between 5.1 and 7.2%).
- A higher proportion of people aged 16 years and over in the Mixed and White ethnic groups experienced domestic abuse in the last year compared with those in the Asian or Asian British group.

Crimes recorded by the police show the following trends:

- In the year ending March 2023, the victim was female in 73.5% of domestic abuse-related crimes.
- Between the year ending March 2020 and the year ending March 2022, 67.3% of victims of domestic homicide were female compared with 12.1% of victims of non-domestic homicide.

Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data presented in this release for the year ending March 2023, are not badged as [National Statistics](#). They are based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey, which resulted in missing data. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates. For more information, see Section 2.1 of our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales: March 2023](#).

### 3 . Understanding domestic abuse

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. One of the strengths of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is that it covers many crimes that are not reported to the police and provides reliable estimates of domestic abuse.

On 4 October 2021, face-to-face interviewing for the CSEW resumed after it was suspended on 17 March 2020 because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Crime Survey estimates for the year ending March 2022 onwards have been suspended of their National Statistics status while we assess data quality since the pandemic. For more information see the [Office for Statistics Regulation's Temporary suspension of National Statistics status](#) for estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales note.

The Home Office collects data on the number of domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes recorded by the police. Domestic abuse-related crimes continued to be recorded by police throughout the coronavirus pandemic. However, police recorded crime data do not provide a measure of prevalence to understand the true extent of domestic abuse.

## 4 . Sex

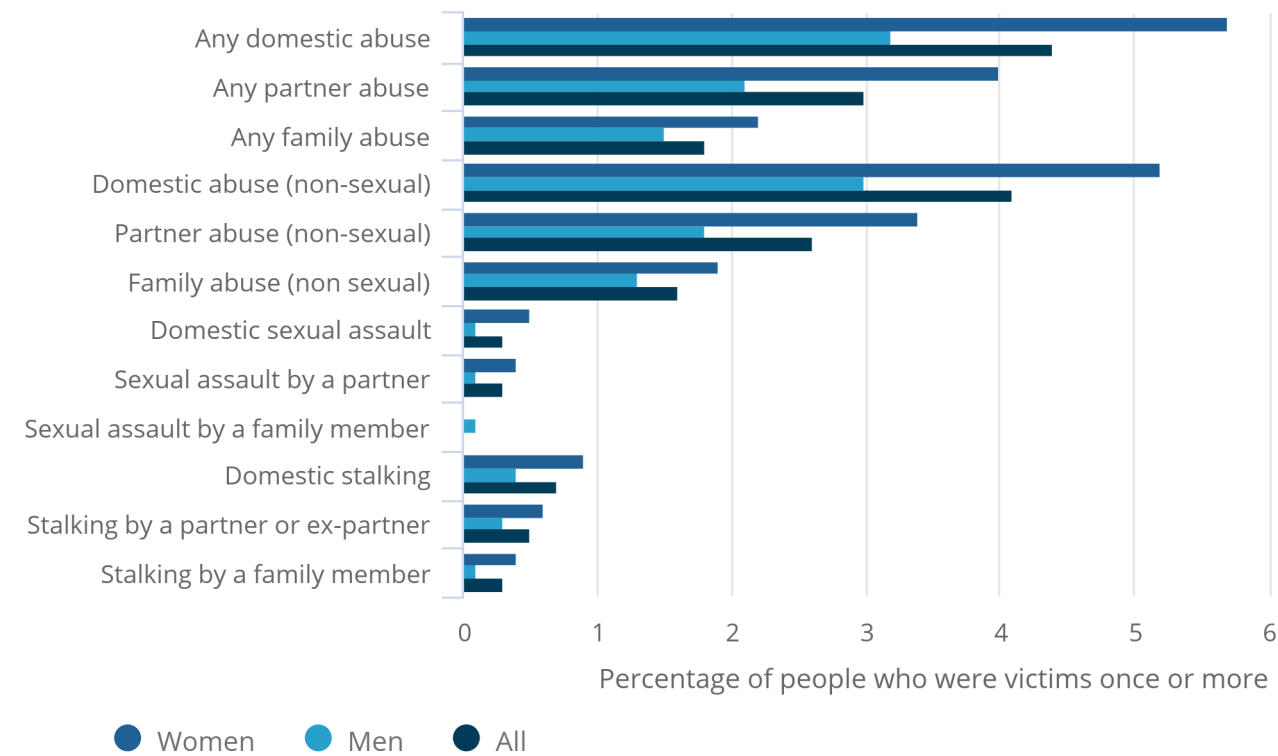
For the year ending March 2023, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 1.4 million women and 751,000 men aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the last year. This is a prevalence rate of approximately 6 in 100 women and 3 in 100 men (Figure 1).

Figure 1: A higher proportion of women than men were victims of domestic abuse in the last year

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by sex and type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending March 2023

Figure 1: A higher proportion of women than men were victims of domestic abuse in the last year

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by sex and type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending March 2023



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Sexual assault categories include attempts.
2. The sum of the overarching domestic abuse categories is not the sum of the sub-categories, as victims who have experienced more than one type of abuse will be included in multiple categories.
3. Estimates for “Sexual assault by a family member” are unavailable because of disclosure constraints.
4. Data for the year ending March 2023 are not badged as National Statistics. They are based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey, which resulted in missing data. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates.

Following the removal of the upper age limit for survey respondents in October 2021, when analysing data over time, we use the 16 to 59 years age range to give a comparable time series.

There were no significant differences in the prevalence of domestic abuse experienced by women or men aged 16 to 59 years in the year ending March 2023 compared with the year ending March 2022. However, there was a significant decrease in the proportion of women aged 16 to 59 years who experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2023 (6.5%) compared with the year ending March 2020 (8.1%).

**Figure 2: Domestic abuse experienced in the last year significantly decreased for women aged 16 to 59 years compared with pre-pandemic levels**

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 to 59 years, by sex, England and Wales, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2023

Figure 2: Domestic abuse experienced in the last year significantly decreased for women aged 16 to 59 years compared with pre-pandemic levels

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 to 59 years, by sex, England and Wales, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2023



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the 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.
2. No data are available for the year ending March 2021 because the Crime Survey for England and Wales was suspended because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
3. Crime Survey estimates for the year ending March 2022 onwards are not designated as National Statistics. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the potential impact of lower response rates on data quality.

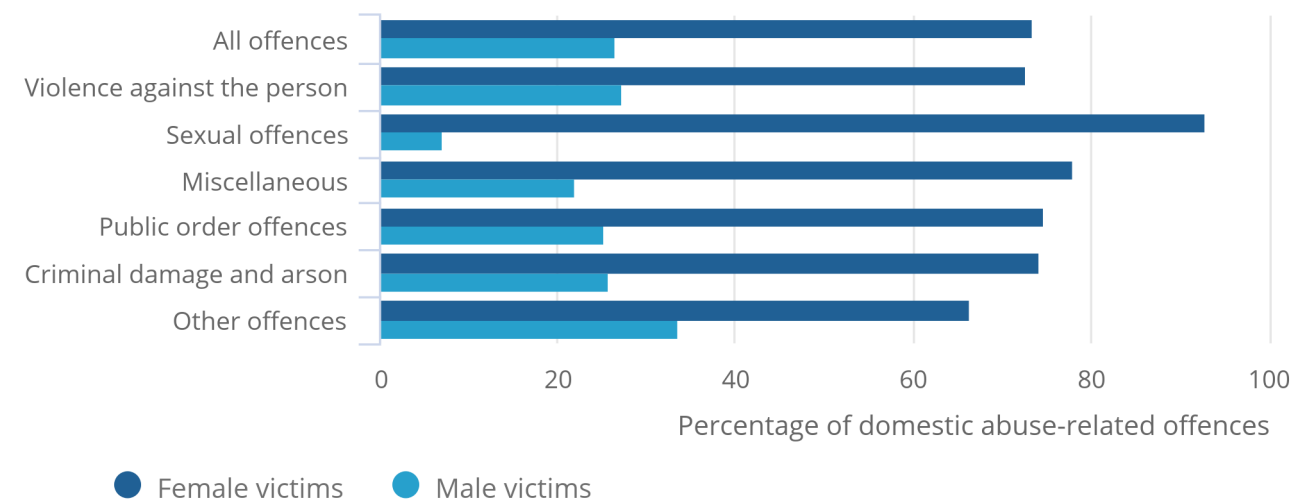
Data supplied from 28 police forces showed that the victim was female in 73.5% of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police in the year ending March 2023, compared with 26.5% of domestic abuse-related crimes where the victim was male. This proportion was similar for most offence categories. For domestic abuse-related sexual offences, the proportion of female victims was 93.0%, compared with 7.0% for males (Figure 3). These findings follow trends seen over previous years.

**Figure 3: There were more female than male victims of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police**

Percentage of domestic abuse-related offences recorded by the police by sex of the victim and selected offence group, England and Wales, year ending March 2023

Figure 3: There were more female than male victims of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police

Percentage of domestic abuse-related offences recorded by the police by sex of the victim and selected offence group, England and Wales, year ending March 2023



Source: Police recorded crime from the Home Office

Notes:

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

## 5 . Age

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for the year ending March 2023 showed that a significantly higher proportion of people aged 16 to 19 years were victims of any domestic abuse (8.0%) compared with those aged 45 to 54 years (4.2%), and those aged 60 years and over (3.2% for 60 to 74 years). For those aged 75 years and over, the percentage of victims was significantly lower than all other age groups (1.4%).

The percentage of women who experienced domestic abuse in the last year was significantly higher than men for the majority of age groups (25 to 34 years, 35 to 44 years, 55 to 59 years, 60 to 74 years and 75 years and over). In these age groups, the percentage of people who had experienced domestic abuse in the last year was around twice as high for women compared with men (Figure 4).

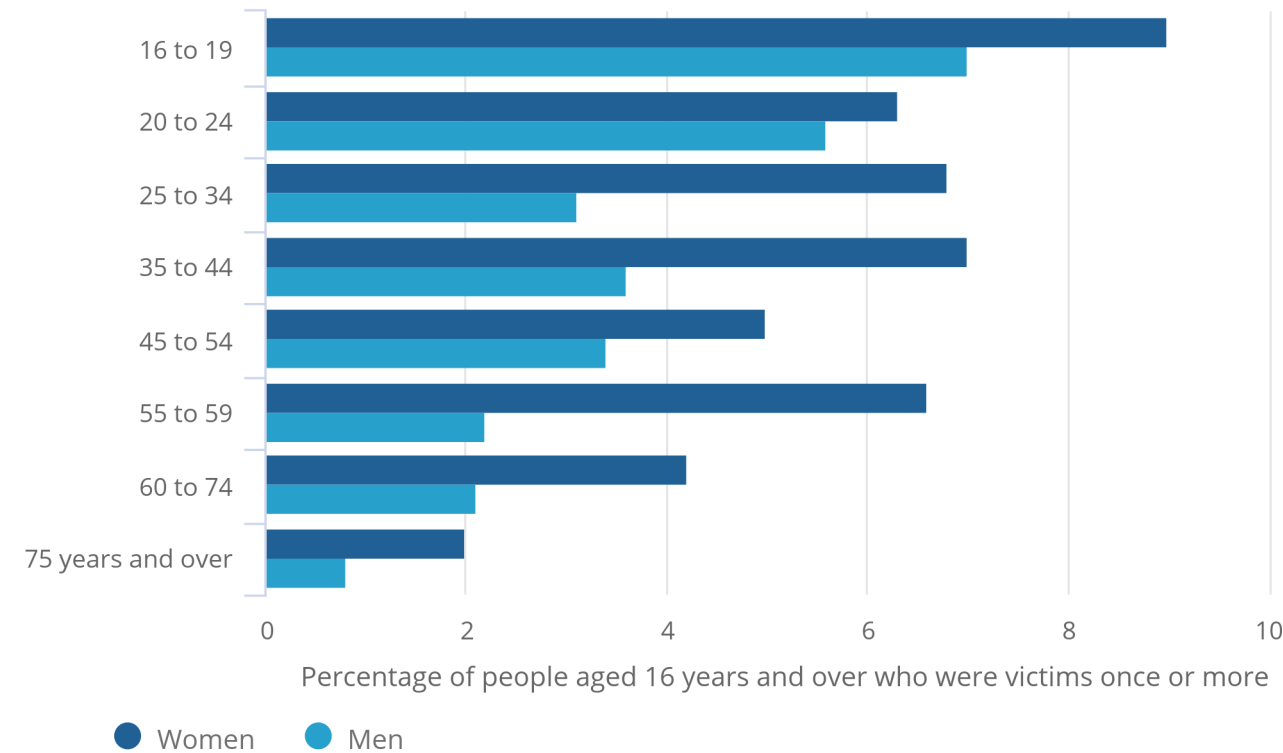


**Figure 4: A higher percentage of people aged 16 to 19 years were victims of domestic abuse in the last year than those aged 45 to 54 years and 60 years and over**

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over by age and sex, England and Wales, year ending March 2023

Figure 4: A higher percentage of people aged 16 to 19 years were victims of domestic abuse in the last year than those aged 45 to 54 years and 60 years and over

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over by age and sex, England and Wales, year ending March 2023



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

- 1. Data for the year ending March 2023 are not badged as National Statistics. They are based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey, which resulted in missing data. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates.

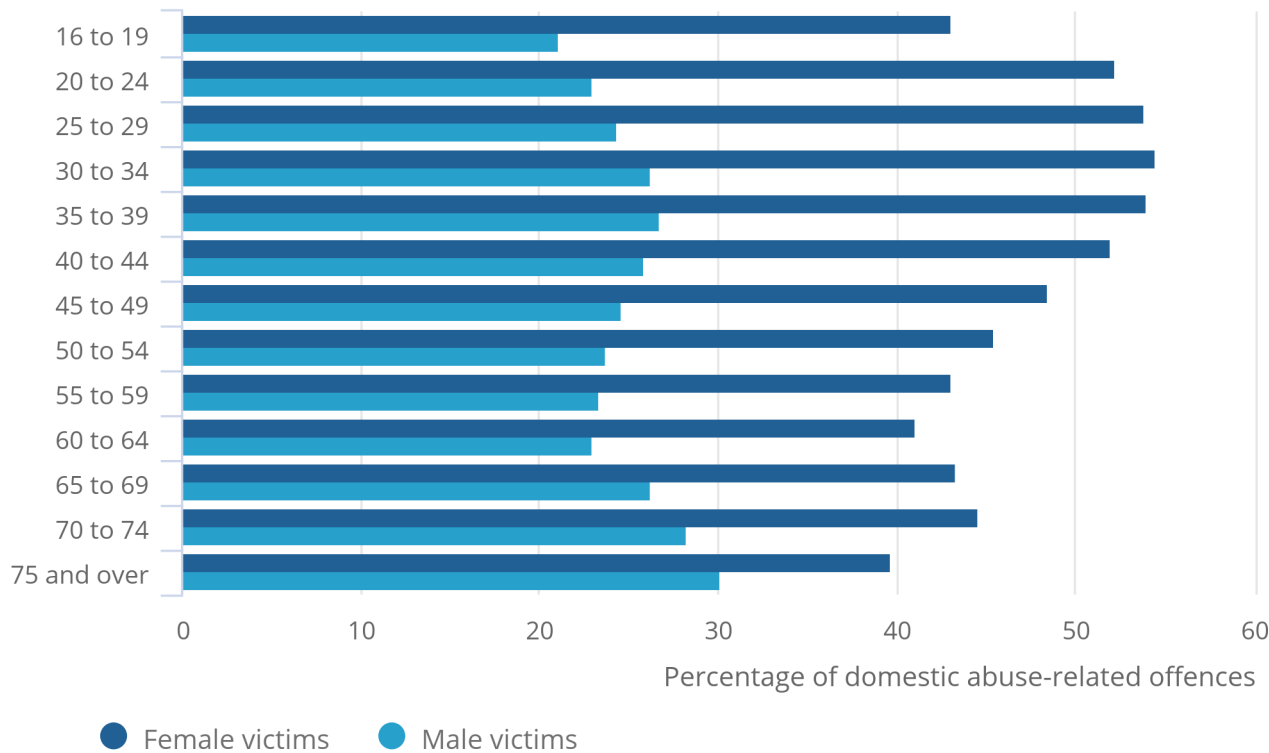
Data supplied from 28 police forces showed that over 50% of police recorded violence against the person offences against women in age groups between 20 and 44 years were domestic abuse-related. The proportion of violence against the person offences against men that were domestic abuse-related was between 20% and 30% for all age groups (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Over half of violence against the person offences were identified as domestic abuse-related for women aged between 20 and 44 years**

Proportion of violence against the person offences recorded by the police, which were identified as domestic abuse-related, by age and sex of victims, England and Wales, year ending March 2023

Figure 5: Over half of violence against the person offences were identified as domestic abuse-related for women aged between 20 and 44 years

Proportion of violence against the person offences recorded by the police, which were identified as domestic abuse-related, by age and sex of victims, England and Wales, year ending March 2023



Source: Police recorded crime from the Home Office

Notes:

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

## 6 . Ethnicity

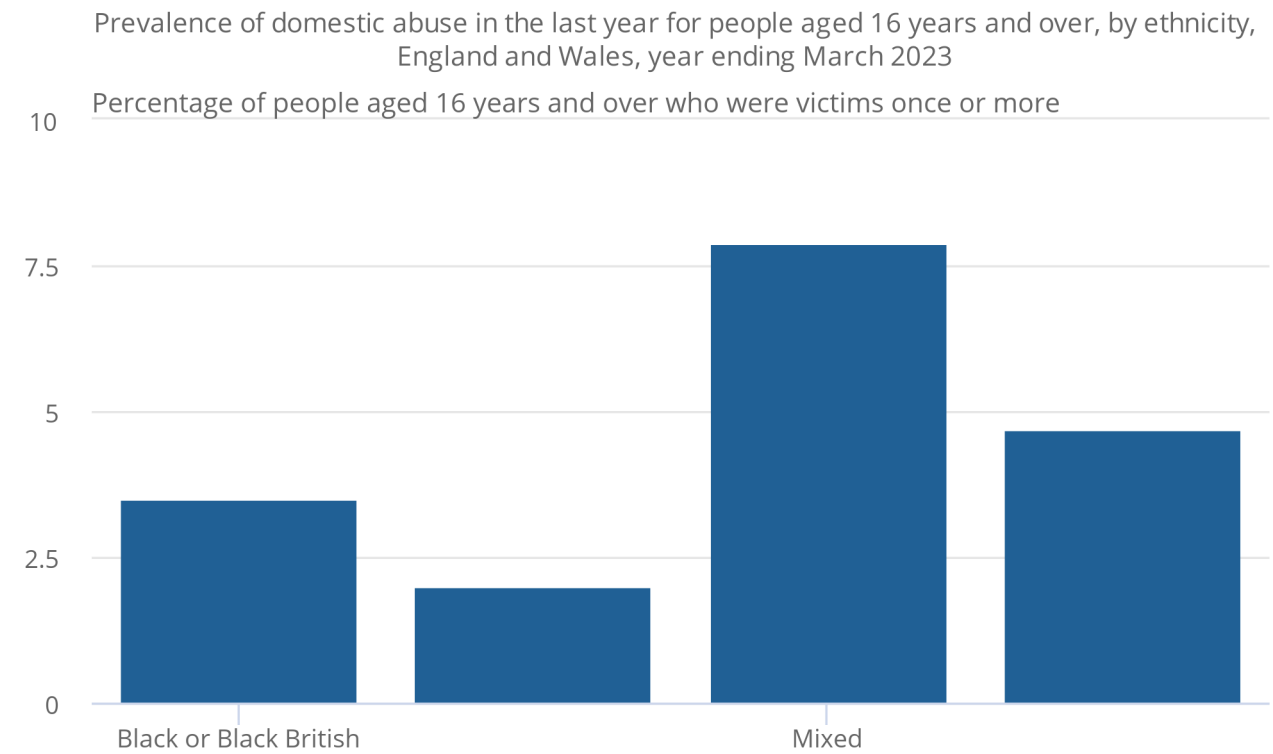
For the year ending March 2023, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that a significantly higher proportion of people aged 16 years and over in the Mixed and White ethnic groups experienced domestic abuse in the last year compared with those in the Asian or Asian British groups (Figure 6).

Almost twice as many women in the White ethnic group experienced domestic abuse in the last year (6.0%) compared with Black or Black British women (3.1%) and Asian or Asian British women (3.0%).

**Figure 6: A significantly higher proportion of those in the Mixed and White ethnic groups experienced domestic abuse in the last year compared with those in the Asian or Asian British group**

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by ethnicity, England and Wales, year ending March 2023

Figure 6: A significantly higher proportion of those in the Mixed and White ethnic groups experienced domestic abuse in the last year compared with those in the Asian or Asian British group



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Estimates for "Other ethnic group" are unavailable because of disclosure constraints.
2. Data for the year ending March 2023 are not badged as National Statistics. They are based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey, which resulted in missing data. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates.

# 7 . Marital status

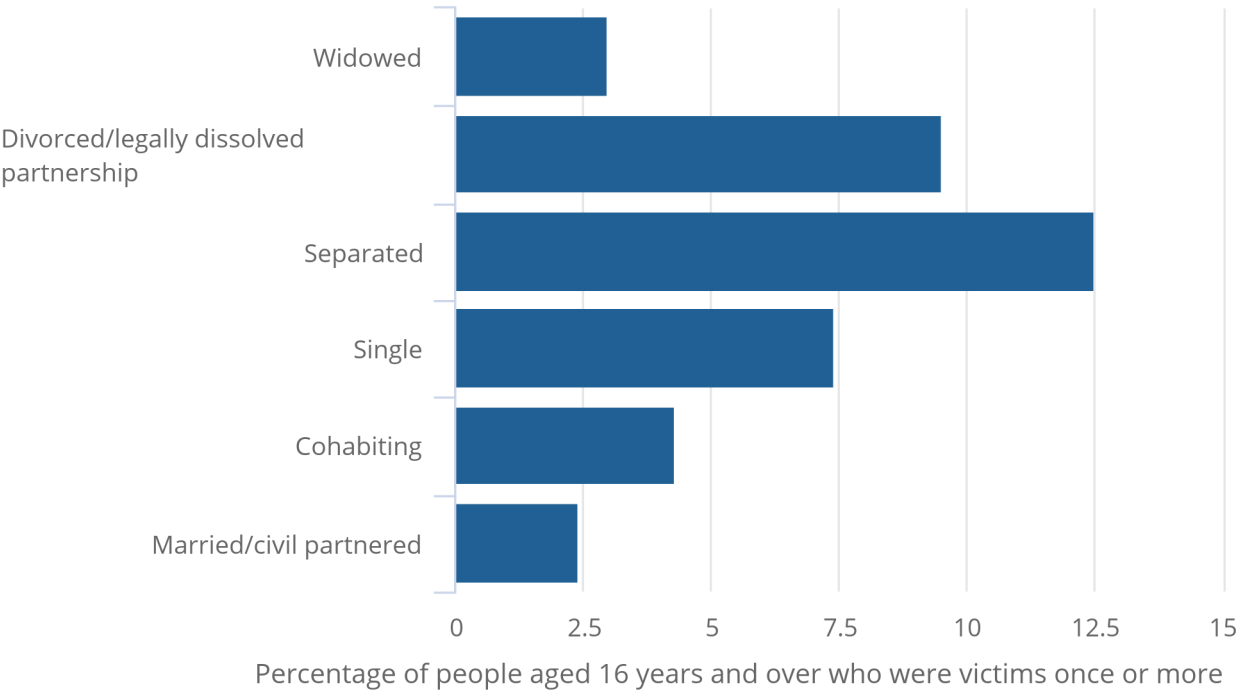
For the year ending March 2023, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that a significantly higher proportion of people aged 16 years and over who were separated or divorced experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those who were married or civil partnered, cohabiting, single or widowed (Figure 7). However, marital status may have changed as a result of the abuse experienced.

**Figure 7: A higher proportion of people who were separated or divorced experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those with other marital statuses**

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by marital status, England and Wales, year ending March 2023

Figure 7: A higher proportion of people who were separated or divorced experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those with other marital statuses

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by marital status, England and Wales, year ending March 2023



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

- 1. Marital status may have changed as a result of the abuse.
- 2. Data for the year ending March 2023 are not badged as National Statistics. They are based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey, which resulted in missing data. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates.

The proportion of men and women who were victims of domestic abuse in the last year was significantly lower for those who were married or civil partnered compared with those who were divorced separated, single or cohabiting.

## 8 . Employment status and occupation

For the year ending March 2023, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that a lower percentage of those who were employed (4.6%) experienced domestic abuse in the last year compared with those with a long-term or temporary illness (11.7%) and those looking after their family and home (8.5%).

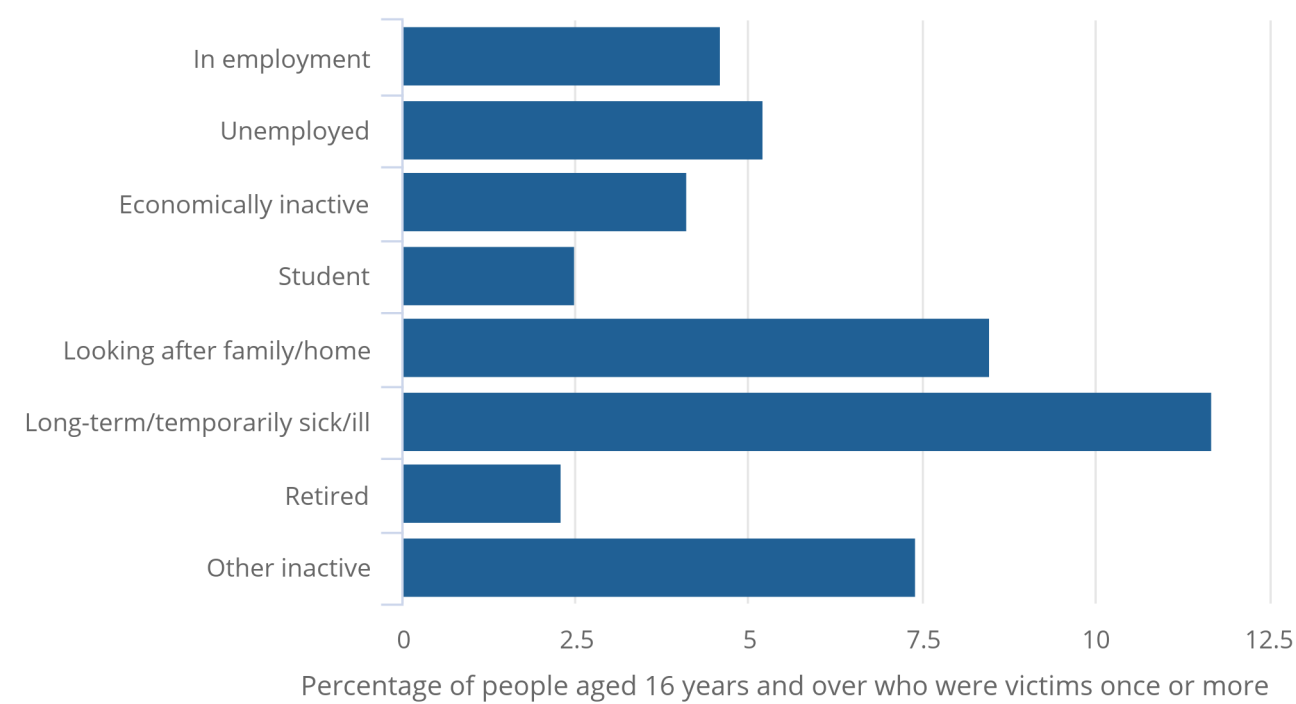
However, students and those who were retired experienced a lower proportion of domestic abuse in the last year compared with those who were employed. It is likely that some of the differences seen by occupation type are also linked to age.

**Figure 8: A lower percentage of domestic abuse victims were employed compared with those who had an illness or were looking after their family and home**

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over by employment status, England and Wales, year ending March 2023

Figure 8: A lower percentage of domestic abuse victims were employed compared with those who had an illness or were looking after their family and home

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over by employment status, England and Wales, year ending March 2023



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Employment status may have changed as a result of the abuse.
2. Data for the year ending March 2023 are not badged as National Statistics. They are based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey, which resulted in missing data. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates.



## 9 . Household structure

Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates, for the year ending March 2023, showed that the proportion of domestic abuse experienced in the last year was higher in households composed of a single person with one or more children (18.6%), compared with households with no children (4.2%), and households with multiple people and one or more children (3.7%) (Figure 9).

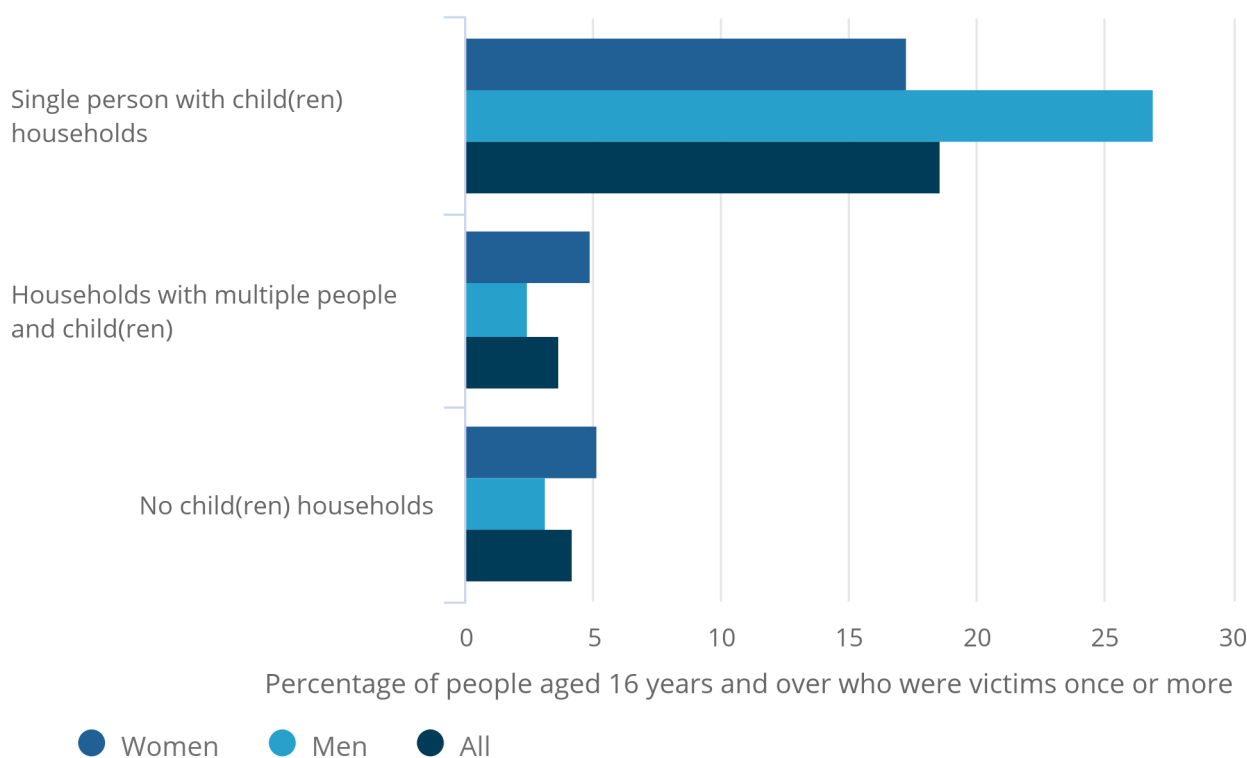
The proportion of women who experienced domestic abuse in the last year was significantly higher in households with no children, or households with multiple adults and one or more children, compared with men. However, household structure may have changed as a result of the abuse experienced.

## Figure 9: A larger percentage of people living in a single-parent household experienced domestic abuse in the last year

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over by household structure, and sex, England and Wales, year ending March 2023

### Figure 9: A larger percentage of people living in a single-parent household experienced domestic abuse in the last year

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over by household structure, and sex, England and Wales, year ending March 2023



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the Office for National Statistics

#### Notes:

1. Household structure may have changed as a result of the abuse.
2. Data for the year ending March 2023 are not badged as National Statistics. They are based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey, which resulted in missing data. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates.

## 10 . Area

English region estimates of any domestic abuse from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for the year ending March 2023 followed the national trend, with a higher percentage of women being victims of domestic abuse in the last year compared with men.

Significantly higher rates of domestic abuse experienced by women compared with men were estimated in the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber, West Midlands, East of England and South East. This gap was largest for the West Midlands, where 6.6% of women were victims of domestic abuse in the last year, compared with 2.7% of men (Figure 10).

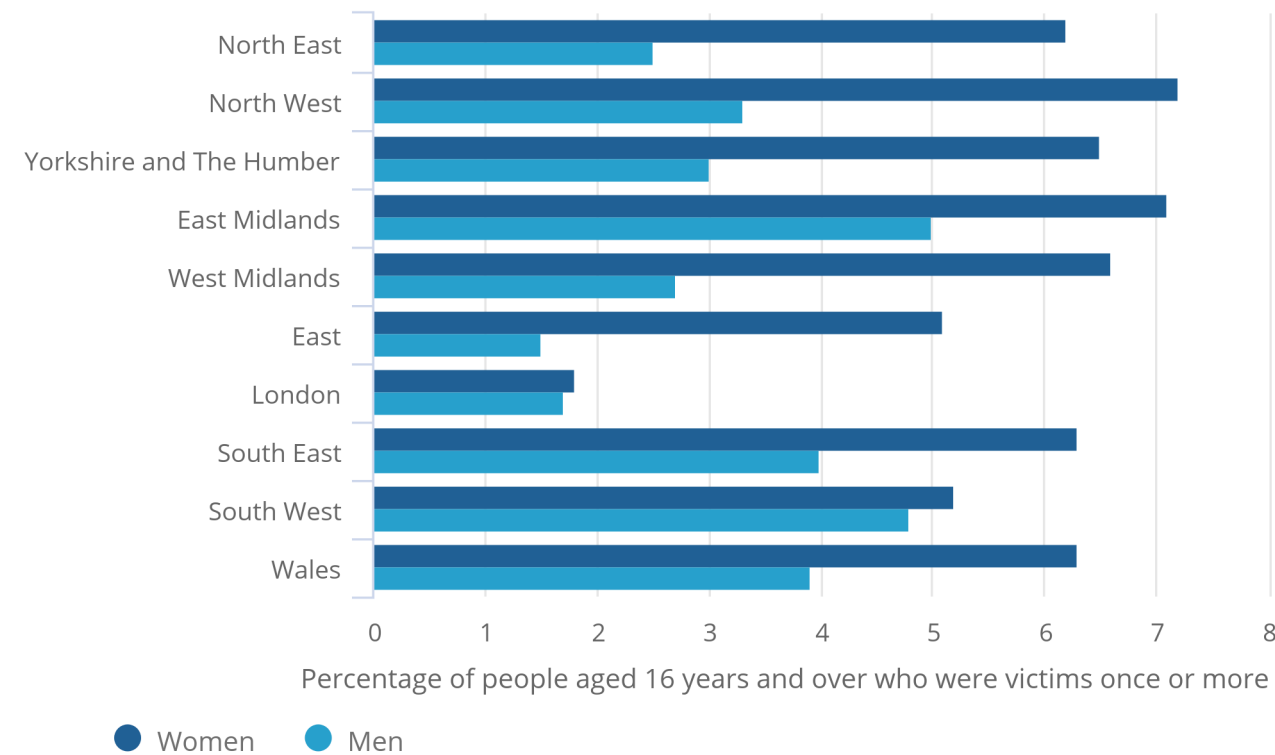
The proportion of women who experienced domestic abuse in the last year was lowest in London compared with all other regions (1.8%). Caution should be taken as area of residence may have changed as a result of the abuse.

**Figure 10: A lower proportion of women in London experienced any domestic abuse in the last year compared with all other regions**

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, English regions and Wales, by sex, year ending March 2023

Figure 10: A lower proportion of women in London experienced any domestic abuse in the last year compared with all other regions

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, English regions and Wales, by sex, year ending March 2023



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Area of residence may have changed as a result of the abuse.
2. Data for the year ending March 2023 are not badged as National Statistics. They are based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey, which resulted in missing data. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates.

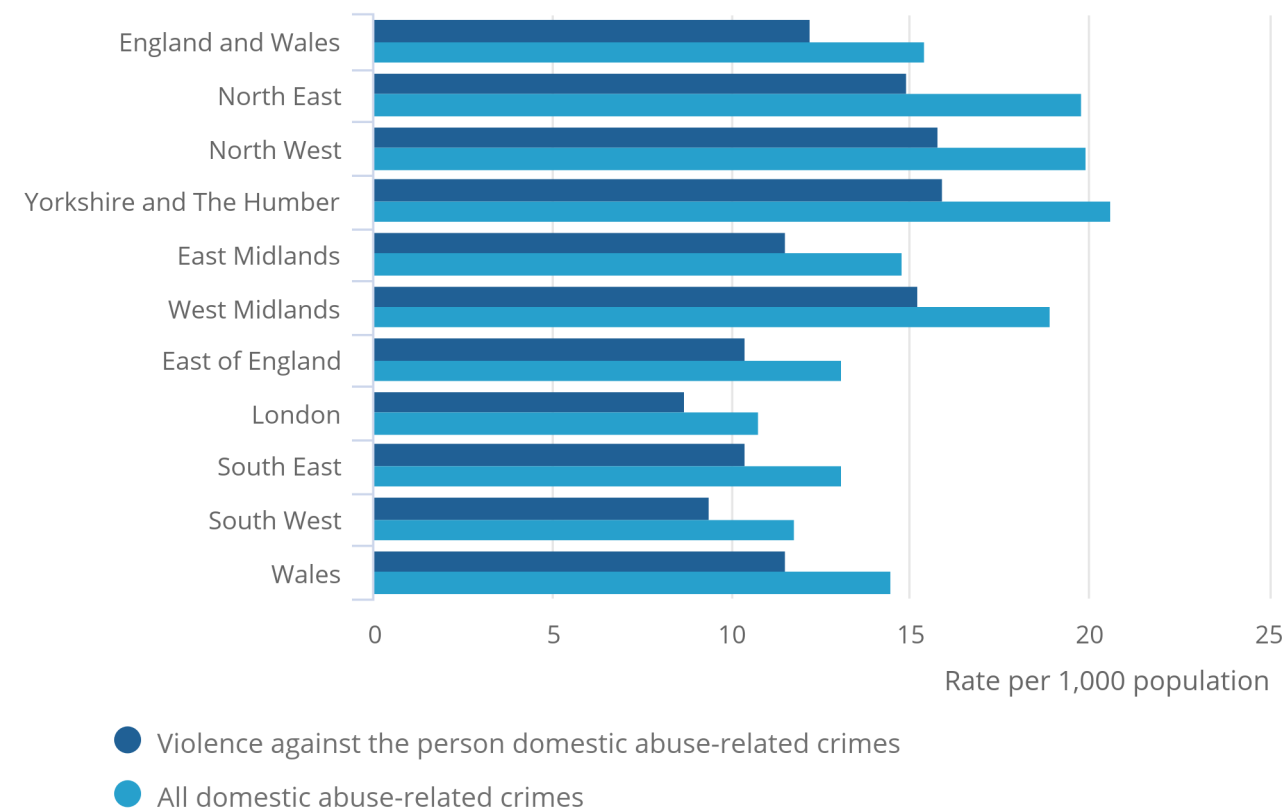
In the year ending March 2023, the highest rate of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police was in Yorkshire and The Humber (20.6 per 1,000 population). The lowest rate was in London (10.8 per 1,000 population). Although this could reflect differences in the rates of domestic abuse across regions, it could also reflect regional differences in the reporting of domestic abuse to the police and how the police subsequently record these offences.

**Figure 11: Yorkshire and The Humber had the highest recorded rates of domestic abuse-related crimes**

Rate of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police, English regions and Wales, year ending March 2023

**Figure 11: Yorkshire and The Humber had the highest recorded rates of domestic abuse-related crimes**

Rate of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police, English regions and Wales, year ending March 2023



Source: Police recorded crime from the Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. The population figures used are the 2021 Census population data provided by the Office for National Statistics
3. 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.
4. Data for Devon and Cornwall Police Force Area have not been included in the year ending March 2023 because of issues with their supply of data following the implementation of new force IT systems.
5. Numbers will be affected by the size of the resident population relative to the transient or visiting populations and may therefore overrepresent the number of crimes relative to the real population of potential victims.
6. Total rate for England and Wales includes offences recorded by British Transport Police. However, no rates are given for British Transport Police as their data are not provided for specified geographical areas.

# 11 . Domestic homicide

Analysis on data from the Home Office Homicide Index combines data for a three-year period to account for the year-to-year variability in the volume of homicides.

Homicide Index data for the year ending March 2020 to the year ending March 2022 show that 67.3% of the victims of domestic homicide were female. This contrasts with non-domestic homicides where the majority of victims over the same time period were male (87.8%).

Of the 249 female domestic homicide victims, the suspect was male in the majority of cases (241). In the majority of female domestic homicides, the suspect was a male partner or ex-partner (74.7%), whereas in the majority of male domestic homicides, the suspect was a male family member (66.1%).

Table 1: Number of domestic homicide victims by type of relationship and sex, by sex of victim and suspect  
Combined data for year ending March 2020 to year ending March 2022, England and Wales

| <b>Suspect sex and relationship type</b> | <b>Female victims of domestic homicides</b> | <b>Male victims of domestic homicides</b> |
|--|---|---|
| <b>All females</b>                       | 8   | 34  |
| <b>Female partner or ex-partner</b>      | 0   | 30  |
| <b>Female family member</b>              | 8   | 4   |
| <b>All males</b>                         | 241   | 87  |
| <b>Male partner or ex-partner</b>        | 186   | 7   |
| <b>Male family member</b>                | 55  | 80  |

Source: Homicide Index data from the Home Office

## Notes

1. Home Office Homicide Index combines data for a three-year period to account for the year-to-year variability in the volume of homicides.
2. As of 6 December 2022; figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available.
3. Home Office statisticians and police forces have undertaken a review of homicide data for year ending March 2019 and year ending March 2020 to update suspect data and cancelled crimes. Totals shown in this table will not match previously published figures.
4. A suspect in a homicide case is defined as either: a person who has been arrested in respect of an offence initially classified as homicide and charged with homicide, including those who were subsequently convicted or a person who is suspected by the police of having committed the offence but is known to have died or committed suicide prior to arrest or being charged.
5. Family members include parents, sons and / or daughters, siblings or other relatives.

## 12 . Domestic abuse in England and Wales data

### [Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics](#)

Dataset | Released 24 November 2023

Domestic abuse numbers, prevalence, types and victim characteristics, based upon findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and police recorded crime.

### [Stalking: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#)

Dataset | Released 24 November 2023

Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales on stalking including numbers, types and victim characteristics.

### [Domestic abuse in England and Wales – Data Tool](#)

Dataset | Released on 24 November 2023

An interactive Excel-based data tool for domestic abuse statistics. It allows users to explore data for their police force area in more detail and compare with other areas.

## 13 . Glossary

### Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence and can include a range of abusive behaviours. It can also be experienced as repeated patterns of abusive behaviour to maintain power and control in a relationship. The [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) defines domestic abuse as any incident or pattern of incidents between those aged 16 years and over who:

- are a partner
- are an ex-partner
- are a relative
- have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 outlines the following behaviours as abuse:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional, or other abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children aged under 18 years who see, hear, or experience the effects of the abuse, as a victim of domestic abuse, if they are related or have a parental relationship to the adult victim or perpetrator of the abuse.



## 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.

## Domestic abuse-related 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 homicide

An offence of murder or manslaughter where the relationship between a 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, and other relatives.

## Homicide suspect

A suspect in a homicide case is defined as either a person who has been arrested in respect of an offence initially classified as homicide and charged with homicide, including those who were subsequently convicted, or a person who is suspected by the police of having committed the offence but is known to have died or committed suicide prior to arrest or being charged.

## Stalking

Defined in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) as two or more incidents (causing distress, fear, or alarm) of receiving obscene or threatening unwanted letters, emails, text messages or phone calls, having had obscene or threatening information about them placed on the internet, waiting or loitering around home or workplace, or following or watching.

# 14 . Data sources and quality

Further quality and methodology information can be found in our [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview bulletin](#).

## Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)

For reasons outlined in [Section 2: Main points](#), CSEW estimates for the year ending March 2023 are not badged as National Statistics and should be treated with caution.

More information about the CSEW can be found in:

- our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#)
- our [Domestic abuse QMI](#)
- our [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system article](#)

Work to improve the data collected to measure domestic abuse from the CSEW is ongoing. More information can be found in our [Redevelopment of domestic abuse statistics: research update November 2023 article](#).

## How the police measure domestic abuse

The Home Office collects data on the number of domestic abuse-related incidents and the number of domestic-abuse related crimes. More information on domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes can be found in our [Domestic abuse QMI](#) and our [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system article](#).

## Home Office Homicide Index

The Home Office Homicide Index provides data on whether homicides are "domestic". The Homicide Index contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales.

Analysis on data from the Homicide Index within this publication combines data for a three-year period (year ending March 2020 to year ending March 2022) to account for the year-to-year variability in the volume of homicides. More information can be found in our [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system article](#).

## 15 . Related links

[Domestic abuse quality and methodology information \(QMI\)](#)

Article | Released 24 November 2023

Quality and Methodology Information for domestic abuse detailing the strengths and limitations of the data, methods used, and data uses and users.

[How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system](#)

Article | Released 24 November 2023

Information on the stages of the criminal justice process in England and Wales, and how data are captured at each stage.

## 16 . Cite this article

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 24 November 2023, ONS website, article, [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2023](#)