

Article

Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system, England and Wales: November 2019

Information on responses to and outcomes of domestic abuse cases in the criminal justice system.

Contact:
Meghan Elkin
crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk
+44 (0)20 7592 8695

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1 . Main points

- The police recorded 746,219 domestic abuse-related crimes in the year ending March 2019, of which 78% were in the violence against the person offence group.
- The police made 32 arrests per 100 domestic abuse-related crimes in the year ending March 2019, equating to 214,965 arrests (in the 39 police forces that supplied data).
- Referrals of suspects of domestic abuse-flagged cases from the police to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for a charging decision fell 11%, from 110,653 in the year ending March 2018 to 98,470 in the year ending March 2019.
- The charging rate¹ in the year ending March 2019 was 74%, a small decrease compared with the previous year (76%).
- Over three-quarters of domestic abuse-related CPS prosecutions were successful in securing a conviction in the year ending March 2019 (77%), a similar level to the year ending March 2018 (76%).

Notes for: Main points

1. The charging rate is the number of suspects of CPS domestic abuse-flagged cases that were charged as a proportion of all those that resulted in a legal decision.

2 . Things you need to know about this publication

This publication is part of an annual release of domestic abuse statistics. It presents data on responses to and outcomes of domestic abuse cases from different stages of the criminal justice system. Data are from the Home Office, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and the Crime Survey for England and Wales. Other commentary discussing domestic abuse in England and Wales can be found in the [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview](#).

The data included in this publication are not directly comparable because they are collected on different bases (for example, victims, crimes, suspects or defendants) and different timescales and reference periods are used to collect the data. Cases may also drop out at any stage of the process. Further information on how domestic abuse cases flow through the criminal justice system and the data sources used in this publication can be found in [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system](#).

The data included in this publication provide a national picture of domestic abuse in England and Wales. The [Domestic abuse in England and Wales – 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.

3 . How do the police measure domestic abuse?

With the exception of controlling or coercive behaviour, domestic abuse is not a specific criminal offence. Offences that are domestic abuse-related will be recorded under the respective offence that has been committed, for example, assault with injury. However, the police are required to flag when an offence is domestic abuse-related. The Home Office has been collecting information from the police on whether recorded offences are related to domestic abuse since April 2015¹.

The Home Office collects data on the number of domestic abuse-related incidents and the number of domestic-abuse related crimes. Domestic abuse-related incidents 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). They include only those reports where, after initial investigation, the police have concluded that no notifiable crime was committed. Incidents of domestic abuse that result in a crime being recorded by the police are included in the data on domestic abuse-related crimes.

Notes for: How do the police measure domestic abuse?

1. In response to a recommendation in the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) 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.

4 . Domestic abuse recorded by the police

There was a total of 1,316,800 domestic abuse-related incidents¹ and crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales in the year ending March 2019 (an increase of 118,706 from the previous year)². Of the domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes recorded in the year ending March 2019, 570,581 (43%) were incidents not subsequently recorded as a crime³. The remaining 746,219 were recorded as domestic abuse-related crimes (57% of the total number of incidents and crimes).

In the previous year, the police recorded 599,549 domestic abuse-related crimes. This amounted to 50% of all domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes recorded by the police. This equates to a volume increase of 146,670 (24%) domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales between the year ending March 2018 and the year ending March 2019 (see [Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics – Appendix Tables, Table 9](#)).

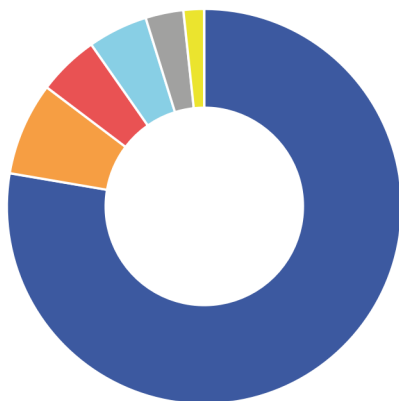
Just over three-quarters (78%) of all domestic abuse-related offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2019 were within the violence against the person offence group (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Violence against the person offences were the most common domestic abuse-related offence

Proportion of offences recorded by the police that were flagged as domestic-abuse related, by selected offence groups, England and Wales, year ending March 2019

Figure 1: Violence against the person offences were the most common domestic abuse-related offence

Proportion of offences recorded by the police that were flagged as domestic-abuse related, by selected offence groups, England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Domestic abuse-related crimes 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.

Stalking and harassment

The police recorded 166,472 domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences in the year ending March 2019⁴. This accounts for just over one-fifth (22%) of all domestic abuse-related crimes in that year (see [Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics – Appendix Tables, Table 17](#)). The majority of domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences fell within the harassment sub-group category (58%), followed by malicious communications (35%) (Figure 2).

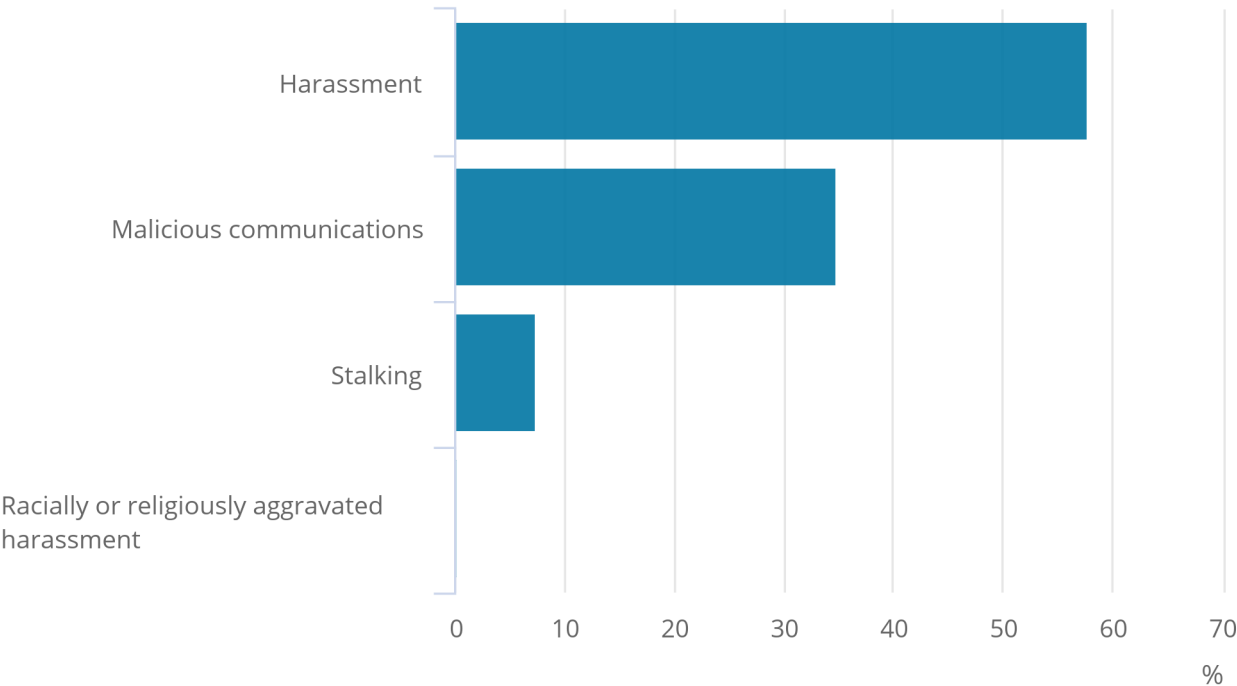
Domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences made up over one-third of all stalking and harassment recorded by the police in the year ending March 2019 (37%, see [Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics – Appendix Tables, Table 18](#)).

Figure 2: The majority of domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences fell within the harassment sub-group category

Proportion of stalking and harassment offences recorded by the police that were flagged as domestic abuse-related, by offence sub-group, England and Wales, year ending March 2019

Figure 2: The majority of domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences fell within the harassment sub-group category

Proportion of stalking and harassment offences recorded by the police that were flagged as domestic abuse-related, by offence sub-group, England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

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.
3. Stalking and harassment is a sub-group of the violence against the person offence group.

Controlling or coercive behaviour

There were 17,616 offences of controlling or coercive behaviour offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2019 (see [Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics – Appendix Tables, Table 19](#)).

Notes for: Domestic abuse recorded by the police

1. Domestic abuse-related incidents cover reports where, after initial investigation, the police have concluded that no notifiable crime was committed. Incidents of domestic abuse that result in a crime being recorded by the police are included in the data on domestic abuse-related crimes. The number of domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes give a total picture of the demand that domestic abuse puts on the police.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Stalking and harassment is a sub-group of the violence against the person offence group.

5 . Police responses to domestic abuse

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) visits each police force in England and Wales to examine how effective they are at reducing crime, protecting vulnerable people from harm and supporting victims. As part of this inspection process, HMICFRS examines police responses to domestic abuse-related crimes.

Arrests and voluntary attendances for domestic abuse-related crimes

HMICFRS collects data from police forces¹ on arrests and voluntary attendances² for domestic abuse-related crimes. The data show that in the year ending March 2019:

- the police made 214,965 arrests for domestic abuse-related crimes (in the 39 police forces that could supply adequate data), equating to 32 arrests per 100 domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by these forces in the same period
- there were 21,292 instances of voluntary attendance (among the 27 forces able to supply adequate data), equating to five voluntary attendances per 100 domestic abuse-related crimes ([Appendix Table 1](#))

The [latest update report](#) by HMICFRS highlights concerns over the variation in arrest rates across police forces.

Domestic violence protection notices and orders

HMICFRS collects data on [domestic violence protection notices \(DVPNs\) and domestic violence protection orders \(DVPOs\)](#) which were introduced across all police forces in England and Wales on 8 March 2014.

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 total of 24 forces provided data on both the number of DVPNs applied for and the number granted by a superintendent in the year ending March 2019. For these forces, 95% of DVPNs applied for were granted (4,349 out of 4,598 applications, [Appendix Table 2](#)).

DVPOs are civil orders 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. Whereas DVPNs can be approved by a police superintendent, DVPOs are granted by a magistrate.

A total of 39 forces provided data on both the number of DVPOs applied for and the number granted by a magistrates' court in the year ending March 2019. For these forces, 90% of DVPOs applied for were granted (5,859 out of the 6,546 applications, [Appendix Table 2](#)).

Domestic violence disclosure scheme

HMICFRS collects data on requests from the [domestic violence disclosure scheme](#) (DVDS, commonly known as Clare's Law³). The DVDS was brought into effect in March 2014 to set out procedures for the police to use in relation to disclosure of information to protect an individual whose current partner has a history of domestic violence and abuse.

The DVDS has two routes:

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

Requests under the DVDS are 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.

A total of 39 police forces provided data on "right to ask" applications and disclosures ([Appendix Table 2](#)). For these forces, 40% of the "right to ask" applications resulted in disclosures (2,575 out of 6,496).

A total of 36 police forces provided data on "right to know" applications and disclosures ([Appendix Table 2](#)). For these forces, 55% of the "right to know" applications resulted in disclosures (4,008 out of 7,252 applications).

Applications will not result in disclosure if there is no information to disclose.

Child protection referrals from domestic abuse incidents

The National Policing Improvement Agency's [Guidance on investigating domestic abuse](#) 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 CAIU⁴.

Data from the HMICFRS show that there were 183,668 child protection referrals as a result of domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes in the year ending March 2019 ([Appendix Table 1](#))⁵. This figure is based on data supplied by 23 police forces in England and Wales.

Notes for: Police responses to domestic abuse

1. Not all police forces are covered because not every force could provide the data.
2. Voluntary attendances act as an alternative to arrest where the suspect attends a police station voluntarily to assist with investigation.
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.
4. 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](#).
5. Multiple child protection referrals can be made for each domestic abuse-related incident or crime 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 and crimes recorded.

6 . Police outcomes of domestic abuse-related offences

The Home Office Data Hub¹ contains information on how domestic abuse-related crimes recorded in the year ending March 2019 have been dealt with by the police. The analyses are based on data from 38 of the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales that supplied data².

In total, 96% of domestic abuse-related crimes had been assigned an outcome by the time the data were extracted³ ([Appendix Table 3](#)). The same proportion of non-domestic abuse-related crimes were assigned an outcome by the time the data were extracted (96%, [Appendix Table 6](#)).

Violence against the person offences made up the majority (78%) of all domestic abuse-related cases in the year ending March 2019 (see [Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics – Appendix Tables, Table 13a](#)). The following points focus on the outcomes of domestic abuse-related violence offences.

There were notable differences in the outcomes between domestic abuse-related violence against the person offences compared with non-domestic abuse-related violence against the person offences (Figure 3):

- domestic abuse-related violence offences had a higher proportion of charge or summons outcomes assigned than non-domestic abuse-related violence offences (11% compared with 8% 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 outcomes⁴ for domestic abuse-related violent offences (in 77% of cases) than non-domestic abuse-related violence offences (54%)

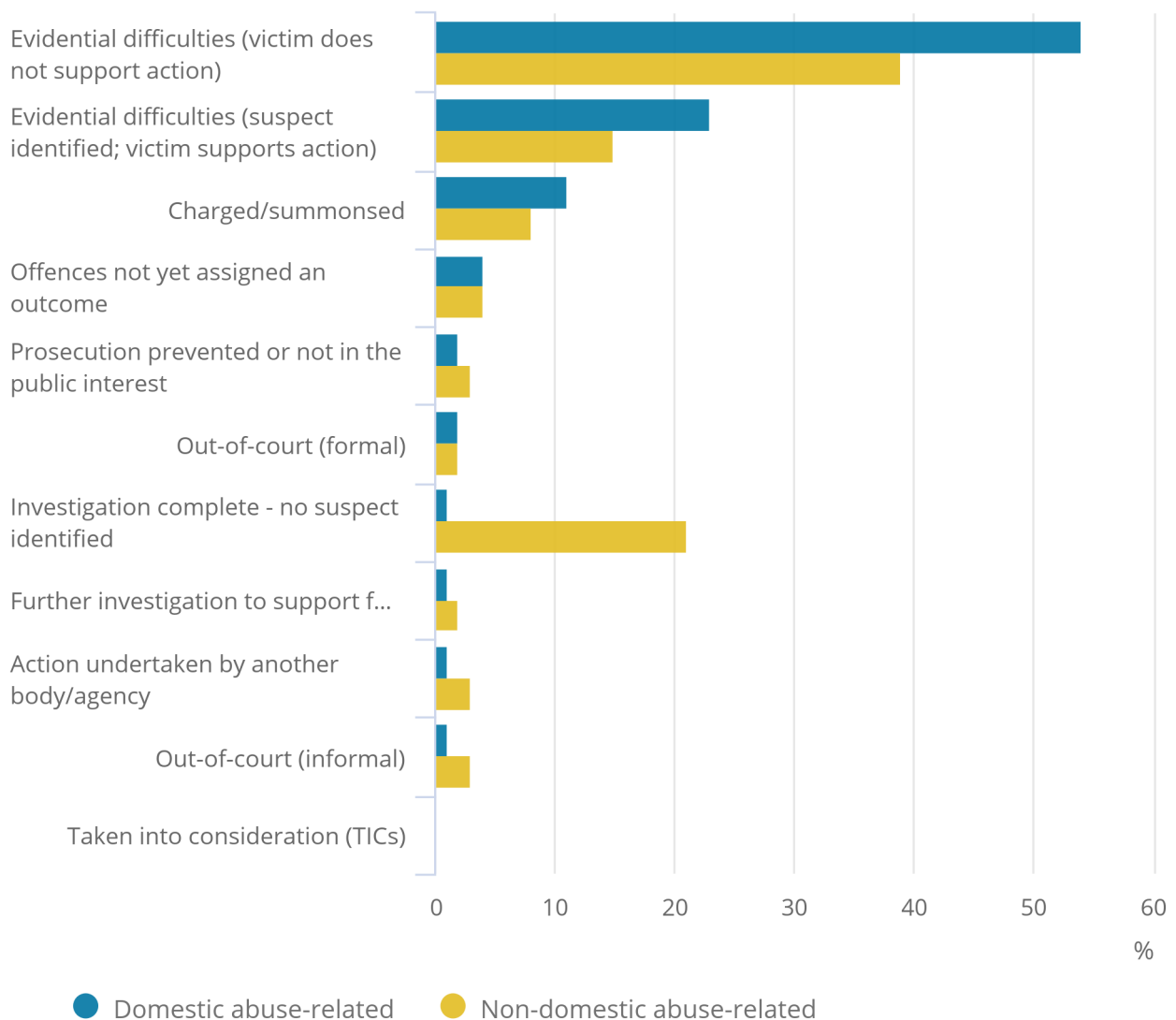
There was a notably higher proportion of domestic abuse-related violence against the person offences assigned an evidential difficulty outcome where the victim does not support action compared with non-domestic abuse-related violence against the person offences (54% compared with 39%, [Appendix Table 7](#)). Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) highlighted in their [latest update report](#) the increasing proportion of domestic abuse cases that are closed because of evidential difficulties, where the victim does not support action, as an area of improvement for some police forces. HMICFRS states 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.

Figure 3: There were variations in the outcomes between domestic abuse-related violence against the person offences compared with non-domestic abuse-related violence offences

Outcomes assigned to domestic abuse-related violence against the person offences and non-domestic abuse-related violence against the person offences, England and Wales, year ending March 2019, by outcome group

Figure 3: There were variations in the outcomes between domestic abuse-related violence against the person offences compared with non-domestic abuse-related violence offences

Outcomes assigned to domestic abuse-related violence against the person offences and non-domestic abuse-related violence against the person offences, England and Wales, year ending March 2019, by outcome group



Source: Home Office Data Hub – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Based on 38 police forces that supplied adequate data.
3. "Out-of-court (formal)" includes caution – adults; caution – youths; and Penalty Notices for Disorder.
4. "Out-of-court (informal)" includes cannabis or khat warnings and community resolutions.
5. "Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest" includes not in the public interest (CPS); not in the public interest (police); offender died; prosecution prevented (suspect under age; suspect too ill; or victim or key witness dead or too ill); and prosecution time limit expired.
6. "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.
7. "Other" includes action undertaken by another body or agency; further action to support formal investigation not in the public interest; and offences not yet assigned an outcome.

Domestic abuse-related sexual offences had a larger proportion of offences not yet assigned an outcome (17%) than any other domestic abuse-related crime ([Appendix Table 4](#)). This is a similar proportion to sexual offences that were non-domestic abuse-related (18%; [Appendix Table 7](#)). Evidential difficulties outcomes were assigned to 76% of domestic abuse-related sexual offences compared with 49% 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 2019 can be compared with figures for the previous year based on 26 police forces that provided outcomes data for both years⁵. These data show that:

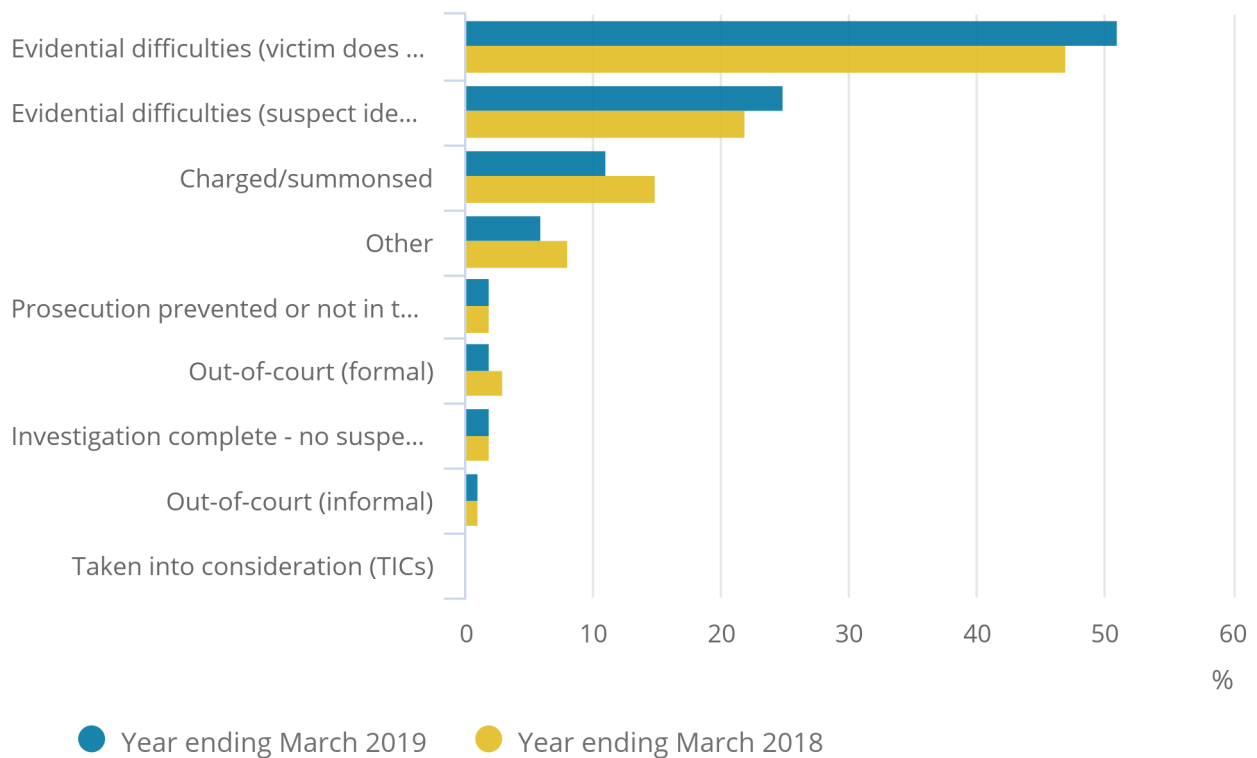
- the proportion of domestic abuse-related crimes that resulted in a charge decreased from 15% in the year ending March 2018 to 11% in the year ending March 2019 (Figure 4)
- the proportion of domestic abuse-related crimes that had evidential difficulties where the victim did not support action increased from 47% in the previous year to 51% in the year ending March 2019 (Figure 4)

Figure 4: The proportion of domestic abuse-related crimes resulting in a charge has decreased over the last year, while the proportion that had evidential difficulties has increased

Outcomes assigned to domestic abuse-related crimes, England and Wales, year ending March 2018 and year ending March 2019

Figure 4: The proportion of domestic abuse-related crimes resulting in a charge has decreased over the last year, while the proportion that had evidential difficulties has increased

Outcomes assigned to domestic abuse-related crimes, England and Wales, year ending March 2018 and year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office Data Hub – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Based on 26 police forces that supplied adequate data in June 2018 and September 2019.
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; and 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 the public interest (police); offender died; prosecution prevented (suspect under age; suspect too ill; or victim or key witness dead or too ill); and 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; and offences not yet assigned an outcome.

Time taken to assign police outcomes

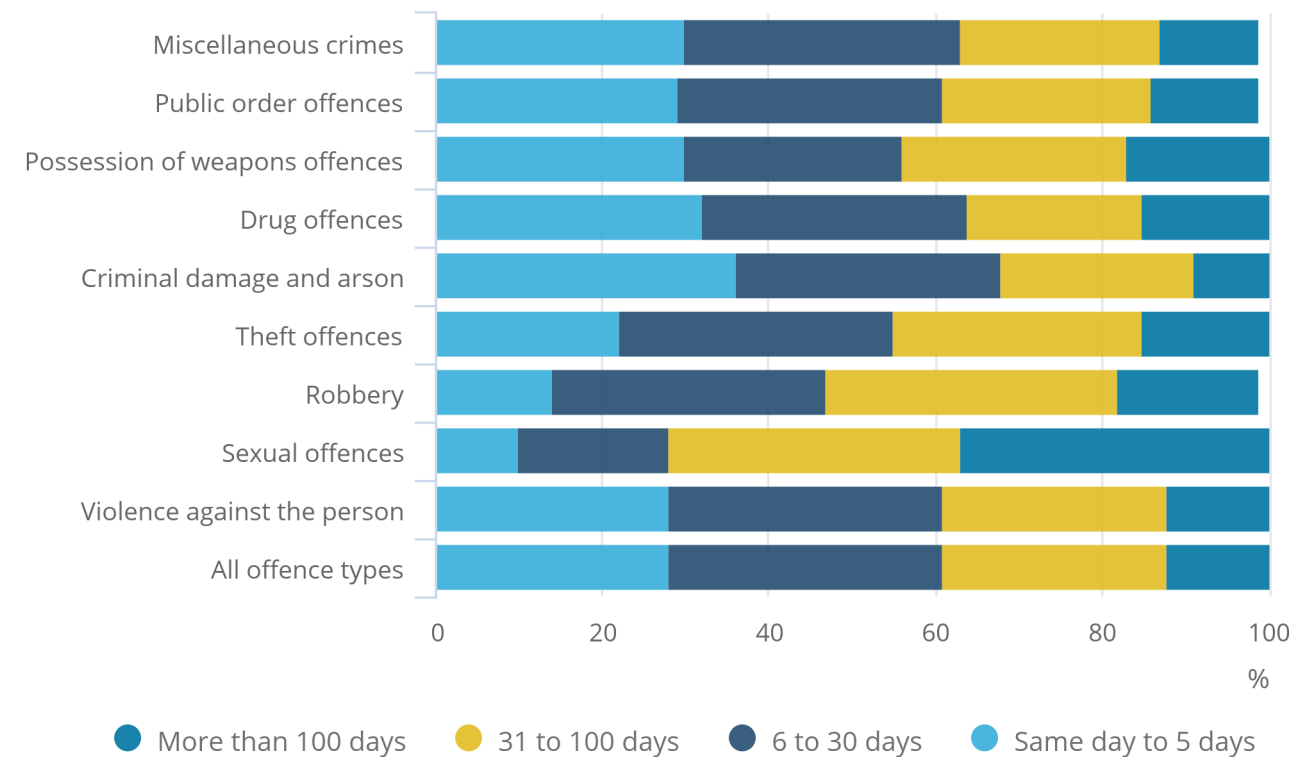
Around one-quarter of domestic abuse-related crimes in the year ending March 2019 had an outcome recorded within five days of the offence being recorded (28%, [Appendix Table 8](#)). Around one-third of outcomes were assigned between 6 and 30 days from when the police recorded the offence (33%) and around one-quarter were assigned between 31 and 100 days (27%). The remaining 13% were assigned more than 100 days after the offence was recorded ([Appendix Table 8](#)). The time taken to assign an outcome varied by offence type (Figure 5).

Figure 5: The length of time between domestic abuse-related sexual offences and outcomes being recorded was higher than other domestic abuse-related offences

Length of time between domestic abuse-related offences and outcomes being recorded, by offence type, England and Wales, year ending March 2019

Figure 5: The length of time between domestic abuse-related sexual offences and outcomes being recorded was higher than other domestic abuse-related offences

Length of time between domestic abuse-related offences and outcomes being recorded, by offence type, England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Home Office Data Hub – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Based on 38 police forces that supplied adequate data.
3. Includes offences recorded in the year ending March 2019 that had been assigned an outcome by the time the data were extracted from the Home Office Data Hub in September 2019.

The length of time taken to assign an outcome to domestic abuse-related violence offences was similar to the length of time taken to assign an outcome to non-domestic abuse-related violence offences ([Appendix Table 8](#)). For example, the proportion of domestic abuse-related violence offences that were assigned an outcome within five days of the offence being recorded was 28% compared with 32% of non-domestic abuse-related violence offences.

For domestic abuse-related sexual offences, the proportion of offences that were assigned an outcome within five days of the offence was lower than for non-domestic abuse-related sexual offences (10% compared with 16%, [Appendix Table 8](#)). Furthermore, domestic abuse-related sexual offences had a higher proportion that took over 100 days to assign an outcome (37%) compared with non-domestic abuse-related sexual offences (31%). This reflects the pattern seen in the proportion of offences assigned an evidential difficulty outcome for domestic abuse-related sexual offences (76%) compared with non-domestic abuse-related sexual offences (49%). 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: Police outcomes of domestic abuse-related offences

1. The Home Office Data Hub is a record-level crime system that police forces have been progressively switching over to. For more information on data from the Home Office, see [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system](#).
2. Avon & Somerset, Bedfordshire, British Transport Police, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cleveland, Derbyshire, Devon & Cornwall, Dorset, Durham, Dyfed-Powys, Essex, Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester, Gwent, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, London, City of, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Norfolk, North Wales, North Yorkshire, Northamptonshire, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley, Warwickshire, West Mercia, and West Yorkshire.
3. Data include offences recorded in the year ending March 2019 that had been assigned an outcome by the time the data were extracted from the Home Office Data Hub in September 2019.
4. "Evidential difficulties" include evidential difficulties where the suspect was identified and the victim supports action and evidential difficulties where the suspect was or was not identified and the victim does not support further action.
5. Avon & Somerset, Bedfordshire, British Transport Police, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cleveland, Devon & Cornwall, Dorset, Durham, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Norfolk, North Wales, North Yorkshire, Northamptonshire, Northumbria, South Wales, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Thames Valley, and West Yorkshire

7 . Pre-charge outcomes of domestic abuse-related cases

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is the principal prosecuting authority in England and Wales, acting independently in criminal cases investigated by the police and others. Data on domestic abuse-related cases^{1,2} referred by the police to the CPS for pre-charge decisions are available through the CPS Case Management System (CMS)³.

Due to a time lag between each stage of the criminal justice system, CPS data do not necessarily follow on from each other and caution should be taken when making comparisons. Further information on how domestic abuse cases flow through the criminal justice system and the data sources used in this publication can be found in [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system](#).

CPS data include both child and adult defendant and victim data. This does 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 data on pre-charge decisions cover domestic abuse-related cases, by suspect.

There was an 11% decrease in the number of suspects of domestic abuse-flagged cases referred to the CPS from the police from the year ending March 2018 to the year ending March 2019 (from 110,653 to 98,470) ⁴. This follows a gradual decrease from the year ending March 2015 to the year ending March 2018 (from 126,461 to 110,653, Table 1).

In their [latest update report](#), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) explains 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.

Table 1: The number of suspects of domestic abuse-related crimes referred by the police to the CPS for a charging decision has decreased over the last four years

The number of suspects of domestic abuse-related crimes referred by the police to the CPS for a charging decision, England and Wales, year ending March 2015 to year ending March 2019

	April 2014 to March 2015	April 2015 to March 2016	April 2016 to March 2017	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2018 to Mar 2019
Number	126,461	124,292	112,844	110,653	98,470

Source: Crown Prosecution Service

Notes

1. Data from the CPS are not designated as official statistics. [Back to table](#)
2. These data are referred to by the CPS as the pre-charge receipt of cases. The number of pre-charge receipts referred by the police relies on the police identifying and flagging the cases, by suspect, prior to being referred to the CPS. It also relies on the CPS administrators identifying and flagging those cases on the CPS CMS when they are first registered. [Back to table](#)

There were 98,680 domestic abuse-flagged cases referred to the CPS from the police that resulted in a finalised pre-charge decision⁵ in the year ending March 2019⁶. This represents a fall of 11% from the year ending March 2018 (110,562 cases, [Appendix Table 9](#)).

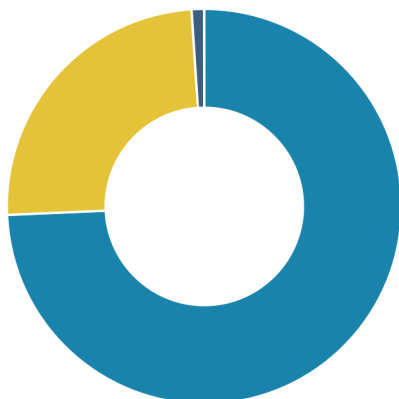
Of the 98,680 domestic abuse-flagged cases referred to the CPS by the police that resulted in a finalised pre-charge decision, 92% resulted in a legal decision⁷ (90,771 cases, [Appendix Table 9](#)). Of these cases, 74% were charged⁸ (67,462), 25% resulted in no prosecution (22,380) and 1% had an out of court disposal⁹ (929, Figure 6). The trend in the proportion of pre-charge decision outcomes has remained relatively stable from the year ending March 2015 to the year ending March 2019 ([Appendix Table 9](#)).

Figure 6: Almost three-quarters of legally decided pre-charge cases resulted in a charge

Proportion of domestic abuse-related pre-charge decision outcomes that were legal decisions, England and Wales, year ending March 2019

Figure 6: Almost three-quarters of legally decided pre-charge cases resulted in a charge

Proportion of domestic abuse-related pre-charge decision outcomes that were legal decisions, England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Crown Prosecution Service

Notes:

1. Data from the CPS are not designated as official statistics.
2. Total pre-charge decisions data are based on the date the charging advice was completed and provided to the police. Therefore, year ending March 2019 data may include pre-charge decisions on cases referred by the police to the CPS in the year ending March 2019 or earlier. Data on pre-charge decisions are also not directly comparable with data on the number of prosecutions, which cover cases finalised during the year ending March 2019.
3. The CPS amended the method for reporting the charging rate in 2019 to exclude non-legal decisions. Data on the charging rate included in previous publications are not comparable to data in this publication.
4. 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.

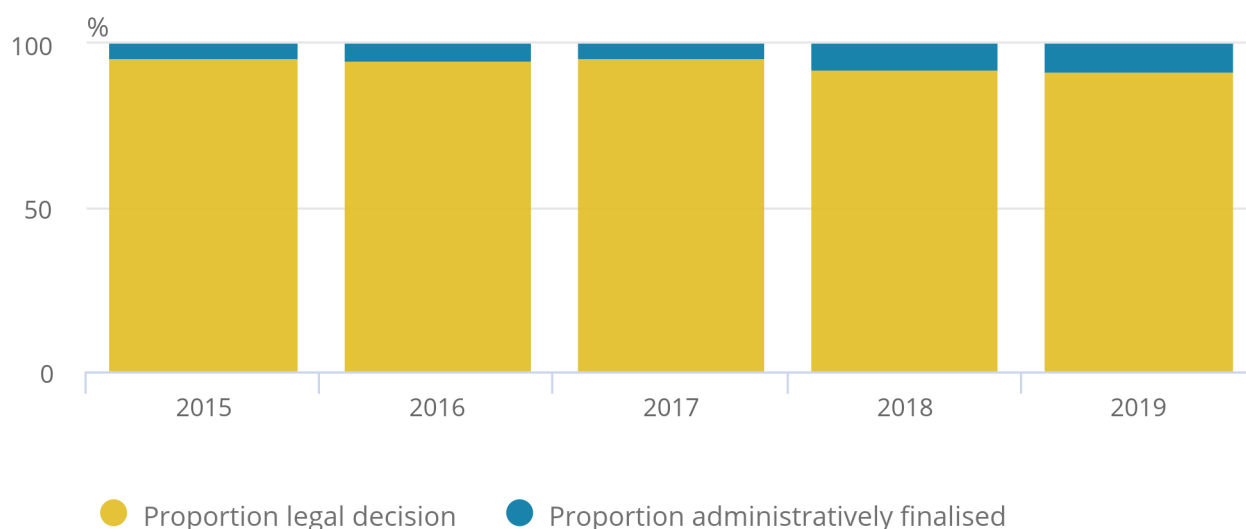
For some cases referred to the CPS for a pre-charge decision, no legal decision is made and instead the case is administratively finalised¹⁰. Of the 98,680 domestic abuse-flagged cases referred to the CPS by the police that resulted in a finalised pre-charge decision, 8% were administratively finalised ([Appendix Table 9](#)). Since the year ending March 2015, the proportion of cases that were administratively finalised has increased by four percentage points (Figure 7).

Figure 7: The proportion of domestic abuse-related pre-charge cases that were administratively finalised was 8% in the year ending March 2019

Proportion of domestic abuse-related pre-charge decisions that were legal decisions compared to administratively finalised, England and Wales, year ending March 2015 to year ending March 2019

Figure 7: The proportion of domestic abuse-related pre-charge cases that were administratively finalised was 8% in the year ending March 2019

Proportion of domestic abuse-related pre-charge decisions that were legal decisions compared to administratively finalised, England and Wales, year ending March 2015 to year ending March 2019



Source: Crown Prosecution Service

Notes:

1. Data from the CPS are not designated as official statistics.
2. Total pre-charge decisions data are based on the date the charging advice was completed and provided to the police. Therefore, year ending March 2019 data may include pre-charge decisions on cases referred by the police to the CPS in the year ending March 2019 or earlier. Data on pre-charge decisions are also not directly comparable with data on the number of prosecutions, which cover cases finalised during the year ending March 2019.
3. Administratively finalised cases are those that have been referred to the CPS for a pre-charge decision but where no legal decision has been made. For example, the CPS has asked the police to provide further information where there is insufficient evidence to make a charging decision or the CPS has advised the police to charge but the suspect has not been charged because the suspect has not answered police bail or cannot be located. Administratively finalised decisions are not legal decisions and may not be the end of the case.
4. Less than 1% of cases in each year were categorised as "other" but have not been included in this chart. Figures therefore do not sum to 100.

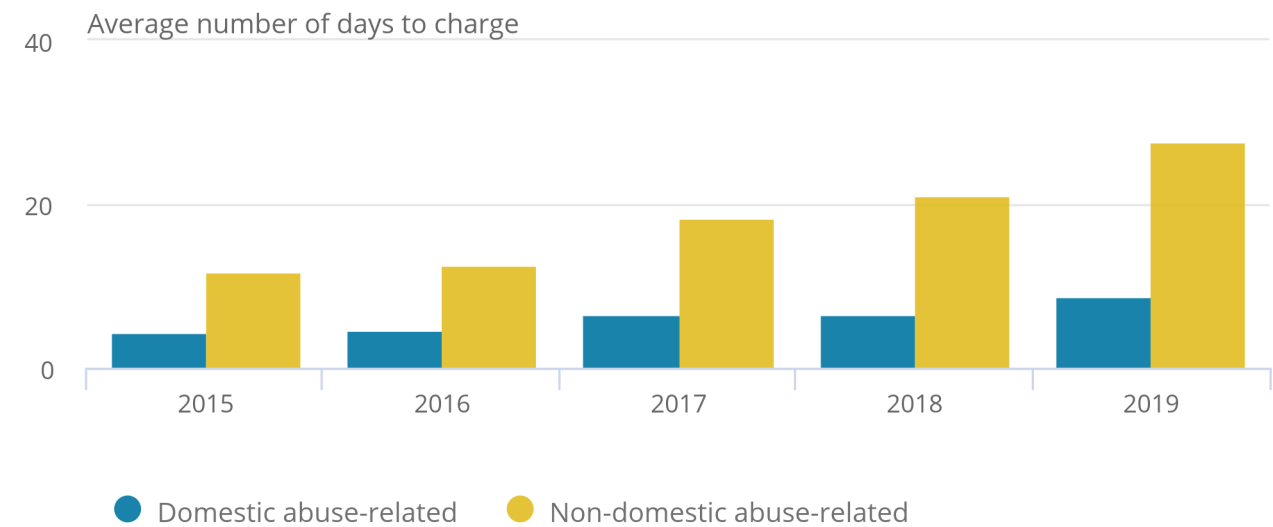
The average number of days taken for a decision to charge^{11,12} to be made in domestic abuse-related cases was 8.9 days in the year ending March 2019, which has doubled since the year ending March 2015 (4.3 days, [Appendix Table 11](#))¹³. This was shorter than non-domestic abuse-related cases, which took an average of 27.8 days to charge in the year ending March 2019 (Figure 8).

Figure 8: The average number of days taken for a decision to charge to be made in domestic abuse-related cases has increased over the last four years

Average number of days to charge domestic abuse-related and non-domestic abuse-related cases, England and Wales, year ending March 2015 to year ending March 2019

Figure 8: The average number of days taken for a decision to charge to be made in domestic abuse-related cases has increased over the last four years

Average number of days to charge domestic abuse-related and non-domestic abuse-related cases, England and Wales, year ending March 2015 to year ending March 2019



Source: Crown Prosecution Service

Notes:

1. Data from the CPS are not designated as official statistics.
2. The CPS 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

Notes for: Pre-charge outcomes of domestic abuse-related cases

1. Cases on the CPS CMS are flagged as domestic abuse-related by lawyers and administrative staff. CPS domestic abuse data are therefore accurate only to the extent that flags have been correctly applied.
2. A domestic abuse flag may be applied at the beginning of a case or later in the prosecution process if a domestic abuse relationship becomes apparent.
3. 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](#).
4. These data are referred to by the CPS as the pre-charge receipt of cases. The number of pre-charge receipts referred by the police relies on the police identifying and flagging the cases, by suspect, prior to being referred to the CPS. It also relies on CPS administrators identifying and flagging those cases on the CPS CMS when they are first registered.
5. Of all the suspects referred by the police, pre-charge decisions are those where the CPS has made a decision on whether to charge, take no further action, recommend an out-of-court decision, administratively finalise or "other".
6. Total pre-charge decisions data are based on the date the charging advice was completed and provided to the police. Therefore, year ending March 2019 data may include pre-charge decisions on cases referred by the police to the CPS in the year ending March 2019 or earlier. Data on pre-charge decisions are also not directly comparable with data on the number of prosecutions, which cover cases finalised during the year ending March 2019.
7. Legal decisions are decisions to charge, prosecute or issue an out-of-court disposal.
8. The CPS amended the method for reporting the charging rate in 2019 to exclude non-legal decisions. Data on the charging rate included in previous publications are not comparable to data in this publication.
9. 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.
10. For some cases referred to the CPS for a pre-charge decision, no legal decision is made and instead the case is administratively finalised. For example, the CPS have asked the police to provide further information where there is insufficient evidence to make a charging decision or the CPS have advised the police to charge but the suspect has not been charged because the suspect has not answered police bail or cannot be located. Administratively finalised decisions are not legal decisions and may not be the end of the case.
11. CPS 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.

8 . Prosecution and conviction outcomes

Data on prosecutions and convictions of domestic abuse-related cases^{1, 2} are available through the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Case Management System (CMS)³.

Due to a time lag between each stage of the criminal justice system, CPS data do not necessarily follow on from each other and caution should be taken when making comparisons. Further information on how domestic abuse cases flow through the criminal justice system and the data sources used in this publication can be found in [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system](#).

CPS data include both child and adult defendant and victim data. This does 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 data on prosecutions cover domestic abuse-related cases, by defendant, finalised during that year⁴.

There was a total of 78,624 prosecutions for domestic abuse-related crimes in the year ending March 2019, which accounted for around 16% of all CPS prosecutions in England and Wales ([Appendix Table 12](#)). This figure shows a volume decrease in the number of domestic abuse-related prosecutions compared with the previous year (89,091, [Appendix Table 9](#)).

Over three-quarters of domestic abuse-related prosecutions were successful in securing a conviction in the year ending March 2019 ([Appendix Table 9](#)). Following small year-on-year increases, the latest figure of 77% is at its highest level since the year ending March 2015 (74%, [Appendix Table 9](#)). In comparison, there have been small fluctuations in the charging rate over the same period, with a small decrease seen in the latest year (see [Section 7](#)).

The defendant pleaded guilty in 70% of domestic abuse-related prosecutions ([Appendix Table 9](#)). Of the 60,160 domestic abuse-related convictions in the year ending March 2019:

- 92% were because of a guilty plea, a figure that has remained relatively flat over the last five years
- 8% secured a conviction following a trial
- less than 1% were proved in absence

Around one-quarter (23%) of domestic abuse-related prosecutions were unsuccessful in securing a conviction, equating to 18,464 prosecutions ([Appendix Table 9](#)).

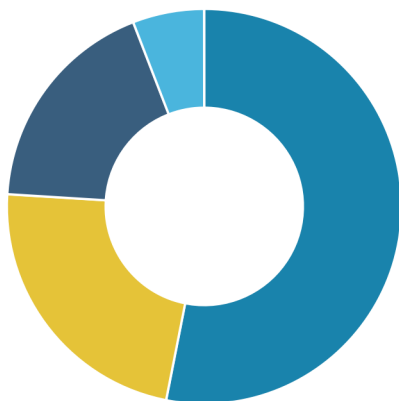
Of these non-convictions, 53% were because of victim-related issues (Figure 9). “Victim-related issues” include retractions, non-attendance at trial or where the “evidence of the complainant does not support the case”.

Figure 9: The majority of non-convictions were a result of victim-related issues

Reasons for non-convictions in domestic abuse-related cases, England and Wales, year ending March 2019

Figure 9: The majority of non-convictions were a result of victim-related issues

Reasons for non-convictions in domestic abuse-related cases, England and Wales, year ending March 2019



Source: Crown Prosecution Service

Notes:

1. Data from the CPS are not designated as official statistics.
2. CPS data on prosecutions cover domestic abuse-related cases, by defendant, finalised during that year and are therefore not directly comparable to data on pre-charge decisions.
3. "Victim-related issues" include retractions, non-attendance at trial or where the "evidence of the complainant does not support the case".
4. "Administratively finalised cases" include cases where prosecution cannot proceed because a defendant has failed to appear at court, the defendant has died or is found unfit to plead, or where proceedings are adjourned indefinitely.
5. "Other reasons" include conflict of evidence or an essential legal element missing.

Victims may not want to be involved in the prosecution for a number of reasons, for example, because of the level of fear and control exerted by the perpetrator or because of a lack of sufficient response or support from agencies. The CPS provides training to independent domestic violence advisors (IDVAs)⁵ who support domestic abuse victims, including support through special measures and speaking to victims at court.

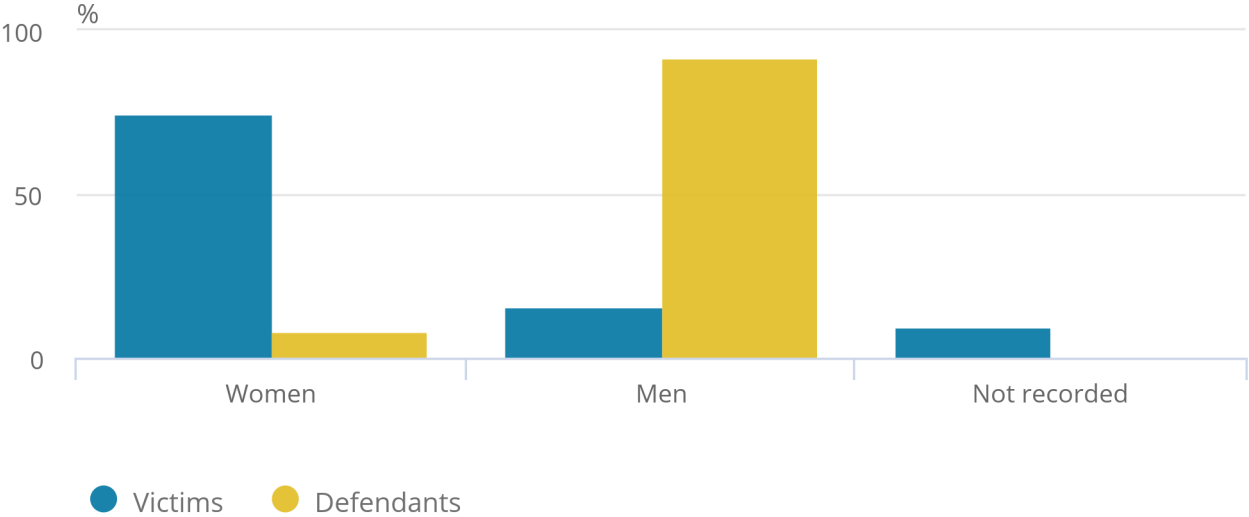
The majority of defendants in domestic abuse-related prosecutions were men in the year ending March 2019 (92%, Figure 10)⁶. In contrast, the majority of victims were female (75%, compared with 16% who were male) ([Appendix Table 13](#)). However, the sex of the victim was not recorded in 10% of prosecutions⁷. If this category was excluded from the analysis, the proportion of female victims would be 83%, with 17% male victims (see [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2019](#) for estimates on victims of domestic abuse by sex from the Crime Survey for England and Wales).

Figure 10: The majority of victims in domestic abuse-related prosecutions were female, while the majority of defendants were male

Sex of victims and defendants in domestic abuse-related cases, year ending March 2019, England and Wales

Figure 10: The majority of victims in domestic abuse-related prosecutions were female, while the majority of defendants were male

Sex of victims and defendants in domestic abuse-related cases, year ending March 2019, England and Wales



Source: Crown Prosecution Service

Notes:

1. Data from the CPS are not designated as official statistics.
2. CPS data on prosecutions cover domestic abuse-related cases, by defendant, finalised during that year and are therefore not directly comparable to data on pre-charge decisions.
3. 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.
4. It is not possible to match data on the sex of victims against data on the sex of defendants. Victim data are only recorded if a case is handled by Witness Care Unit (WCU) staff. Not all cases are managed by WCUs, and a number of CPS areas do not use this system. There are many cases for which victim information is therefore not recorded.

Disclosing private sexual images without consent

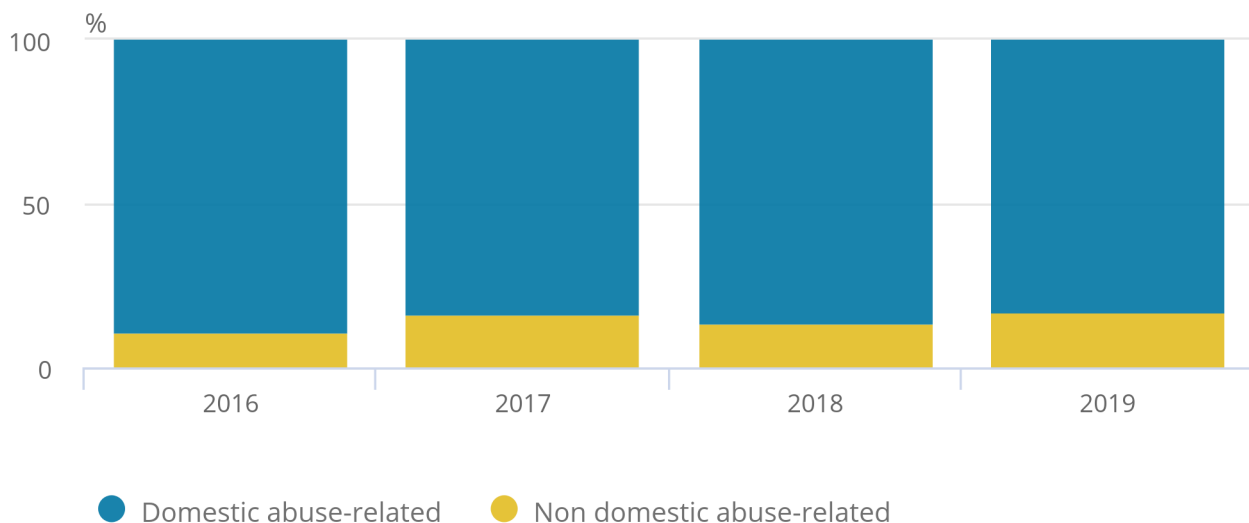
Offences involving the disclosure of private sexual photographs and films with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, commonly referred to as “revenge porn”, were made a specific criminal offence in April 2015⁸. The CPS records how many prosecutions involving the offence have been flagged as domestic abuse-related. Of the 376 prosecutions commenced in the year ending March 2019⁹, 83% (313) were flagged as being domestic abuse-related (Figure 11). This is a decrease from the comparable proportion (86% or 400 cases) of domestic abuse-related prosecutions in the previous year.

Figure 11: The proportion of “revenge porn” prosecutions flagged as domestic abuse-related has decreased slightly over the last year

Proportion of domestic abuse-related “revenge porn” prosecutions, England and Wales, year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2019

Figure 11: The proportion of “revenge porn” prosecutions flagged as domestic abuse-related has decreased slightly over the last year

Proportion of domestic abuse-related “revenge porn” prosecutions, England and Wales, year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2019



Source: Crown Prosecution Service

Notes:

1. Data from the CPS are not designated as official statistics.
2. CPS data on prosecutions cover domestic abuse-related cases, by defendant, finalised during that year and are therefore not directly comparable to data on pre-charge decisions.
3. "Revenge porn" involves the disclosure of private sexual images without consent with the intention to cause anxiety or distress.

Stalking and harassment

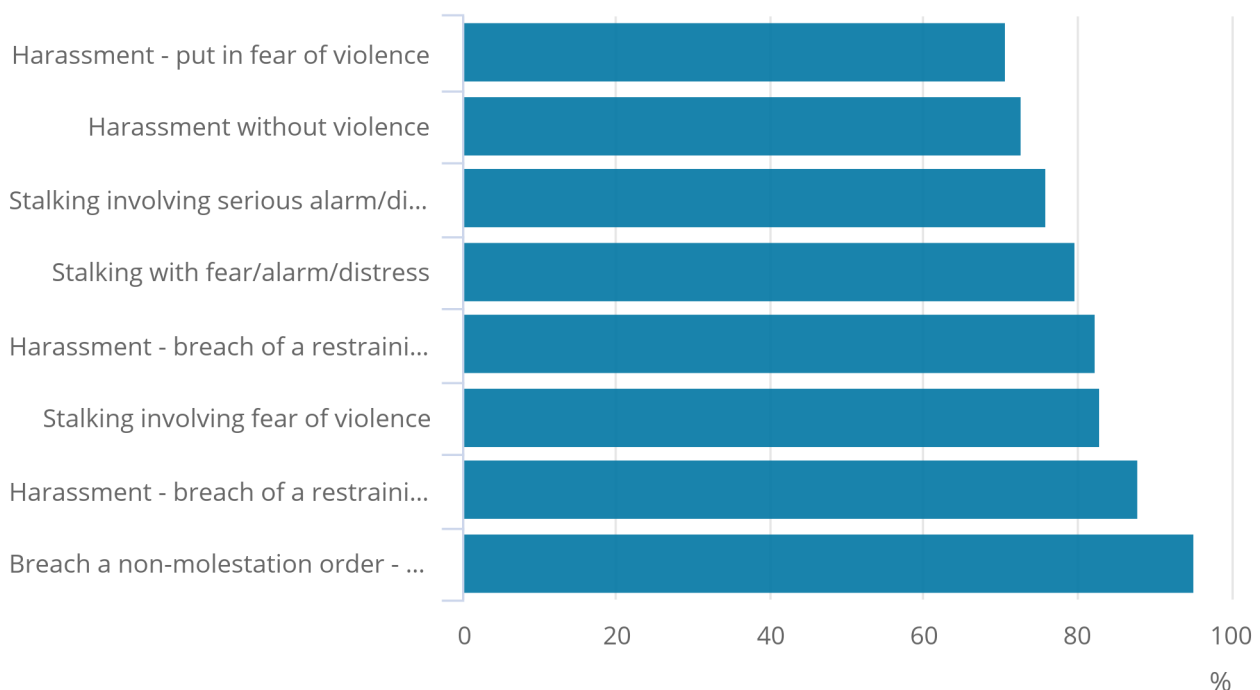
The CPS Management Information System (MIS) recorded a total of 32,692 cases of stalking and harassment that came to a first hearing at a magistrates' court in the year ending March 2019. Of these, 84% (27,601) were domestic abuse-related. For all types of stalking and harassment offences, over 70% of cases heard at a magistrates' court were domestic abuse-related. Of the cases where a restraining order on conviction was breached, 88% were flagged as domestic abuse-related (Figure 12).

Figure 12: More than 70% of stalking and harassment offences that reached a first hearing at a magistrates' court were flagged as domestic abuse-related

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 2019

Figure 12: More than 70% of stalking and harassment offences that reached a first hearing at a magistrates' court were flagged as domestic abuse-related

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 2019



Source: Crown Prosecution Service

Notes:

1. Data from the CPS are not designated as official statistics.
2. Offences recorded in the Management Information System (MIS) Offences Universe are those which reached a hearing. There is no indication of final outcome or if the charged offence was the substantive charge at finalisation.
3. Data relates to the number of offences recorded in magistrates' courts, in which a prosecution commenced, as recorded on the Case Management System.
4. Offences data are not held by defendant or outcome.
5. Offences recorded in the Offences Universe of the MIS are those which were charged at any time and reached at least one hearing. This offence will remain recorded whether or not that offence was proceeded with and there is no indication of final outcome or if the offence charged was the substantive offence at finalisation.
6. These data have been drawn from the CPS's administrative IT system, which (as with any large-scale recording system) is subject to possible errors with data entry and processing. The figures are provisional and subject to change as more information is recorded by the CPS. The CPS are committed to improving the quality of the data and from mid-June 2015 introduced a new data assurance regime which may explain some unexpected variance in some future data sets.

Controlling or coercive behaviour

Controlling or coercive behaviour became a specific criminal offence as part of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and came into force on 29 December 2015¹⁰. The CPS MIS recorded 1,177 offences of controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship¹⁰ where a prosecution commenced at magistrates' courts in the year ending March 2019 ([Appendix Table 15](#)). This is a 23% increase from 960 in the year ending March 2018. This increase is likely to be attributable to the 95% increase in the number of controlling or coercive behaviour offences recorded by the police from the year ending March 2018 to the year ending March 2019 (see [Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2019](#)). Such increases are common for new offences, and the rise could be attributed to improvements in recognising incidents of controlling or coercive behaviour by the police and using the new law accordingly.

Criminal justice outcomes data on controlling or coercive behaviour are available from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) for the year ending December 2018. However, MoJ data refer to a different time period to prosecutions data published by the CPS and relate to the outcomes for offenders of controlling or coercive behaviour, rather than offences heard at a magistrates' court¹¹. The MoJ and CPS also measure prosecutions and convictions differently. While CPS data are primarily collected for case management purposes, MoJ measures are based on the "final" offence. As a result, data from the MoJ and CPS 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. This is primarily as a result of the time it takes for an offence to be investigated, the police to assign an outcome, and the prosecution path through the courts to a completed court case.

Where controlling or coercive behaviour was the principal offence¹², there were a total of 516 defendants prosecuted and 10 cautions in the year ending December 2018 ([Appendix Table 16](#)). There were 308 offenders convicted of and sentenced for controlling or coercive behaviour¹³. The number of defendants prosecuted, convicted and sentenced for controlling or coercive behaviour within this time period was slightly higher in volume than the year ending December 2017. The majority of defendants prosecuted for controlling or coercive behaviour were male (97%), and the average custodial sentence given was 20 months.

Prosecutions where controlling or coercive behaviour was the principal offence accounted for 55% of all controlling or coercive behaviour prosecutions (516 cases, Table 2).

Convictions where controlling or coercive behaviour was the principal offence accounted for a higher proportion of total convictions than where controlling or coercive behaviour was the non-principal offence (68% compared with 32% respectively, Table 2).

Table 2: The number of prosecutions and convictions were higher where controlling or coercive behaviour was the principal offence compared to the non-principal offence
Prosecutions and convictions of controlling or coercive behaviour, by principal and non-principal offence and sex of defendant, England and Wales, year ending December 2018

	Number of prosecutions				Number of convictions			
	Male	Female	Unknown	All	Male	Female	Unknown	All
Principal offence	499	10	7	516	305	1	2	308
Non-principal offence	416	4	9	429	144	2	1	147
Total	915	14	16	945	449	3	3	455

Source: Ministry of Justice

Notes

1. These data are classified as Experimental Statistics. [Back to table](#)

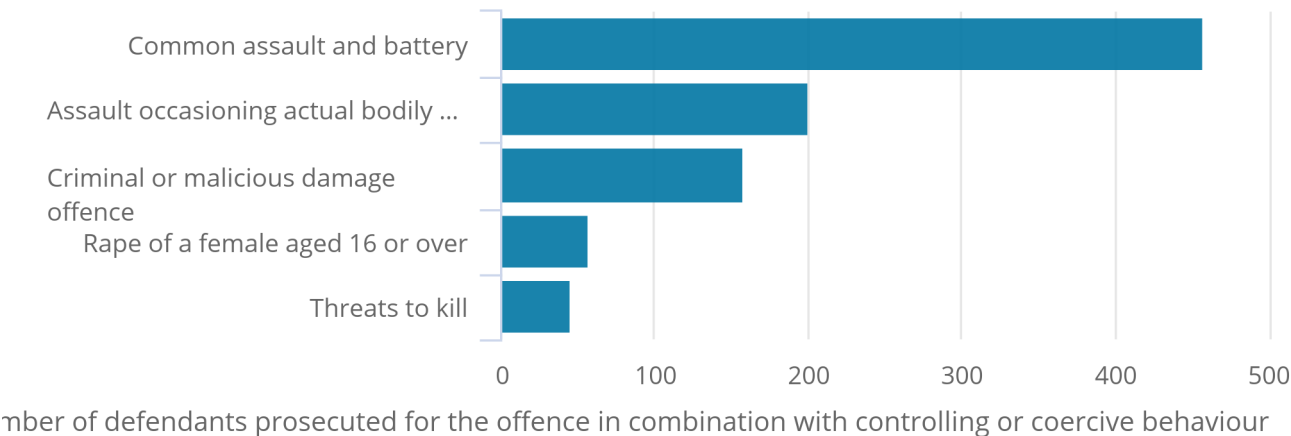
The MoJ published experimental data on the number of defendants prosecuted for combinations of offences ^{14,15}. The data show that in the year ending December 2018, 1,456 defendants were prosecuted for the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in combination with another offence. Common assault and battery was the offence for which defendants were most commonly prosecuted in combination with controlling or coercive behaviour (457) (Figure 13).

Figure 13: The most common offence that defendants were prosecuted for alongside controlling or coercive behaviour was common assault and battery

Five most common offences for which defendants were prosecuted alongside the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour, England and Wales, year ending December 2018

Figure 13: The most common offence that defendants were prosecuted for alongside controlling or coercive behaviour was common assault and battery

Five most common offences for which defendants were prosecuted alongside the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour, England and Wales, year ending December 2018



Source: Ministry of Justice

Notes:

1. These data are classified as experimental statistics.
2. These data are an update of previously published data on prosecutions for non-principal offences, by principal offence. These data provide the number of defendants prosecuted for combinations of offences irrespective of whether either offence was the principal or non-principal offence.

Notes for: Prosecution and conviction outcomes

1. Cases on the CPS are flagged as domestic abuse-related by lawyers and administrative staff, therefore CPS domestic abuse data are accurate only to the extent that flags have been correctly applied.
2. A domestic abuse case may be applied at the beginning of a case or later in the prosecution process if a domestic abuse relationship becomes apparent.
3. Data from the CPS are not designated as official statistics.
4. Data on prosecutions and convictions are not directly comparable with pre-charge data which covers those domestic abuse-related cases, by suspect, referred by the police to the CPS for pre-charge decisions in the year ending March 2019 or earlier.
5. More information on IDVAs can be found in [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system](#).
6. 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.
7. It is not possible to match data on the sex of victims against data on the sex of defendants. Victim data are only recorded if a case is handled by Witness Care Unit (WCU) staff. Not all cases are managed by WCUs and a number of CPS areas do not use this system. There are many cases for which victim information is therefore not recorded.
8. These offences are included within the offence category of "harassment" under the [Home Office Counting Rules](#).
9. The CPS data are only available from the offence-based data system and therefore cannot include data on police referrals, charging and outcomes.
10. The 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.
11. A defendant who appears before both a 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 a magistrates' court.
12. These data relate to defendants for whom engaging in controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship was the principal offence for which they were dealt with (or, for defendants who are found guilty of two or more offences, where engaging in controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship has the higher penalty).
13. 202 offenders were given an immediate custodial sentence, 64 were given a suspended sentence, 36 were given a community sentence and 2 were issued a conditional discharge.
14. These data are classified as Experimental Statistics.
15. These data are an update of previously published data on prosecutions for non-principal offences, by principal offence. These data provide the number of defendants prosecuted for combinations of offences irrespective of whether either offence was the principal or non-principal offence.

9 . Domestic violence remedy orders

The family courts can grant two types of remedy orders to prevent domestic violence:

- 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

The MoJ publishes data on the number of domestic violence remedy applications and orders made ¹.

Since the year ending March 2010, the number of non-molestation applications decreased from 20,274 to a low of 16,094 in the year ending March 2012 ([Appendix Table 18](#)). Since then, the numbers have been increasing. There were 21,216 applications in the year ending March 2019.

The number of non-molestation orders made has increased by 22% over the last nine years to 27,787 in the year ending March 2019 ([Appendix Table 18](#)).

In contrast, the number of occupation applications made has declined by over one-third (33%), from 7,250 applications in the year ending March 2010 to 4,865 applications in the year ending March 2019. The number of orders made decreased by 46% from 4,348 orders in the year ending March 2010 to 2,336 in the year ending March 2019 ([Appendix Table 18](#)).

The majority of applicants for domestic violence remedy orders were female: 92% of non-molestation orders and 87% of occupation orders in the year ending March 2019² ([Appendix Table 19](#)).

The MoJ also publishes data on breaches of non-molestation orders^{3,4}. There were 38 cautions and 2,694 defendants prosecuted for breaches of non-molestation orders in the year ending December 2018 ([Appendix Table 17](#)). There were 2,800 offenders convicted of breaches of non-molestation orders and 2,768 offenders were sentenced for this offence.

Notes for: Domestic violence remedy orders

1. It is not possible to compare across applications and orders, because they do not refer to the same cohort of cases.
2. This percentage excludes applicants with an unknown gender from the calculation.
3. Breaches of non-molestation orders are classified as a criminal offence.
4. These data relate to defendants for whom breach of a non-molestation order was the principal offence for which they were dealt with (or, for defendants who are found guilty of two or more offences, where breach of a non-molestation order has the higher penalty).

10 . More about domestic abuse

Other commentary discussing domestic abuse in England and Wales, and quality and methodology information, can be found in the [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview](#).

