

Article

Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2019

Prevalence, long-term trends and types of domestic abuse experienced by adults, based on findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, and police recorded crime.

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

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1 . Main points

- According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales year ending March 2019, an estimated 5.7% of adults (2.4 million) experienced domestic abuse in the last year.
- There was no significant change in the prevalence of domestic abuse experienced in the last year compared with the year ending March 2018.
- The police recorded a total of 1,316,800 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes¹ in the year ending March 2019.
- Of these, 746,219 were recorded as domestic abuse-related crimes, an increase of 24% from the previous year.
- As the survey showed no change, the increase in police recorded crime may reflect improved recording by the police and increased reporting by victims.

Notes for: Main points

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 . Things you need to know about this publication

This publication is part of an annual release of domestic abuse statistics. It presents the following information:

- estimates of the prevalence of domestic abuse from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)
- numbers of domestic abuse-related crimes, domestic homicides, and coercive control offences recorded by the police
- trends in domestic abuse victimisation over time

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

This publication uses findings from the self-completion section of the CSEW¹. The CSEW covers the population living in households in England and Wales; it does not cover the population living in group residences (for example, care homes or student halls of residence) or other institutions. More information about the CSEW can be found in [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system](#).

The age range for respondents eligible for the self-completion module was expanded from 59 years to 74 years in April 2017. This publication reports primarily on those aged 16 to 74 years, for which we currently have two years of data. Where analysis requires more than the last two years of data we have reported using the 16 to 59 years age range. Data for both age groups are provided separately within the [Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics – Appendix Tables](#).

All changes reported in this publication are statistically significant at the 5% level unless stated otherwise. Headline CSEW prevalence estimates for domestic abuse included within this publication have previously been published in July 2019 alongside the [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2019 bulletin](#).

Notes for: Things you need to know about this publication

1. Estimates are based on the self-completion module on domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking. In this case, self-completion means that respondents are given a tablet computer on which to complete their answers.

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. The CSEW provides reliable estimates of the prevalence of domestic abuse using a consistent methodology that is not affected by changes in recording practices and police activity, or by changes in the propensity of victims to report to the police. While the CSEW provides the best available estimate of trends in the prevalence of domestic abuse, it cannot be used to make any inferences about demands on the police.

Domestic abuse in the (CSEW) combines the following different types of abuse:

- non-sexual abuse: physical force, emotional or financial abuse, or threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to them
- sexual assault: rape or assault by penetration (including attempts), or indecent exposure or unwanted touching
- stalking¹: 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 watching²

The CSEW collects information on these types of abuse carried out by a partner (including a former partner) and carried out by a family member other than a partner (father or mother, step-father or mother or other relative).

This definition broadly matches the [government definition](#) of domestic violence and abuse which defines domestic abuse as:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling³, coercive⁴, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional"

The Home Office collects data on the number of domestic abuse-related incidents and the number of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police. Domestic abuse-related incidents only include 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.

For more information on how domestic abuse is measured within the CSEW and by the police, see [Annex 1: Measuring domestic abuse](#).

Notes for: Understanding domestic abuse

1. As the CSEW questions include stalking by a current partner, it is not consistent with the [legal definition of stalking and harassment](#).
2. From the year ending March 2013 survey onwards, the definition of stalking was changed to meet the criteria of two or more incidents specified in the legal definition that was introduced in April 2013.
3. Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
4. Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

4 . Crime Survey for England and Wales shows no change in domestic abuse prevalence

Prevalence of domestic abuse experienced in the last year

For the year ending March 2019, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that an estimated 2.4 million adults aged 16 to 74 years¹ experienced domestic abuse in the last year. This equates to a prevalence rate of approximately 6 in 100 adults (Figure 1). The latest prevalence estimates for all types of domestic abuse experienced in the last year showed no statistically significant change compared with the previous year.

Information on the prevalence of domestic abuse by demographic variables such as sex and ethnicity can be found in the [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, year ending March 2019](#) publication.

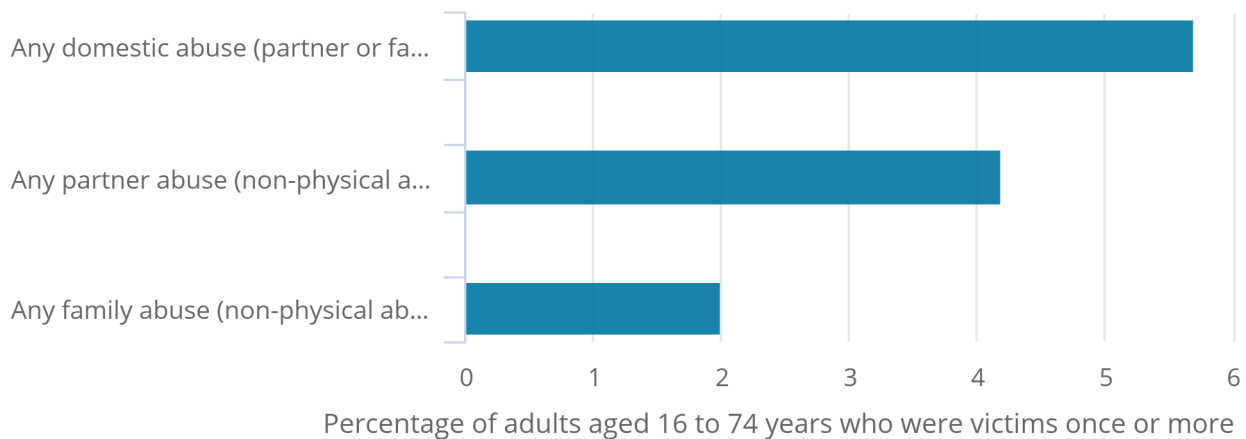
Figure 1 shows that a higher percentage of adults experienced abuse carried out by a partner (4.2%) than by a family member (2.0%).

Figure 1: A higher percentage of adults were victims of partner abuse than family abuse

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 74 years, by perpetrator-relationship, England and Wales, year ending March 2019

Figure 1: A higher percentage of adults were victims of partner abuse than family abuse

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 74 years, by perpetrator-relationship, England and Wales, year ending March 2019



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

Notes:

1. Partner abuse refers to abuse carried out by a partner or ex-partner.
2. Some victims may have experienced both partner and family abuse in the last year.

In terms of the types of abuse experienced in the last year, Figure 2 shows that:

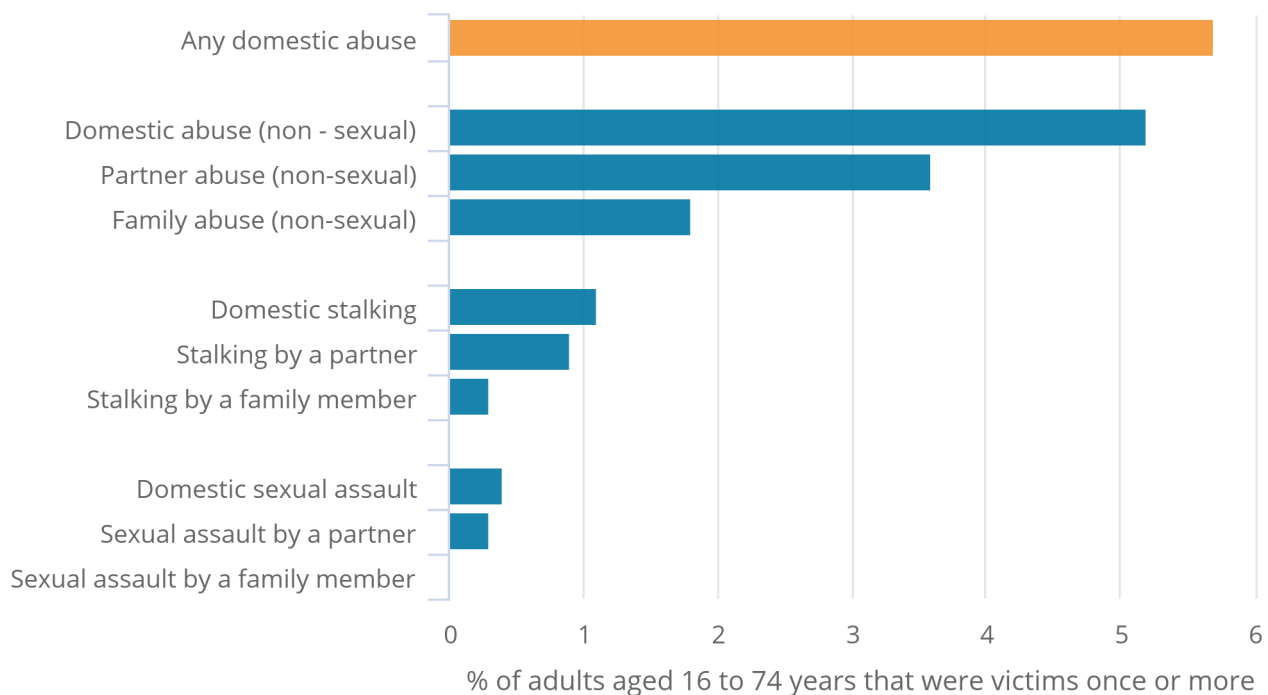
- non-sexual domestic abuse (which comprises physical force, emotional abuse, financial abuse, threats and force) was the most common type of domestic abuse experienced by adults (5.2%)
- domestic stalking was experienced by 1.1% of adults
- domestic sexual assault was experienced by 0.4% of adults

Figure 2: Non-sexual domestic abuse was most commonly experienced

Percentage of adults aged 16 to 74 years who have experienced domestic abuse in the last year, by type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending March 2019

Figure 2: Non-sexual domestic abuse was most commonly experienced

Percentage of adults aged 16 to 74 years who have experienced domestic abuse in the last year, by type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending March 2019



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

Notes:

1. Chapter 5 of the [User guide](#) provides definitions of the various types of domestic abuse.
2. Abuse carried out by a partner also includes abuse carried out by an ex-partner.
3. Sexual assault categories include attempts.
4. 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.

The cumulative effect of small year-on-year reductions has resulted in a significantly lower prevalence of domestic abuse experienced in the last year for the year ending March 2019 (6.3%) compared with the year ending March 2005 (8.9%; [Appendix Table 4b](#)). Similarly, the number of estimated victims of domestic abuse in the last year for the year ending March 2019 (2.1 million) is significantly lower than the number in the year ending March 2005 (2.7 million; [Appendix Table 5b](#)).

Although most year-on-year changes in prevalence have been insignificant, the prevalence of domestic abuse experienced in the last year did drop significantly to 6.5% in the year ending March 2009 (Figure 3).

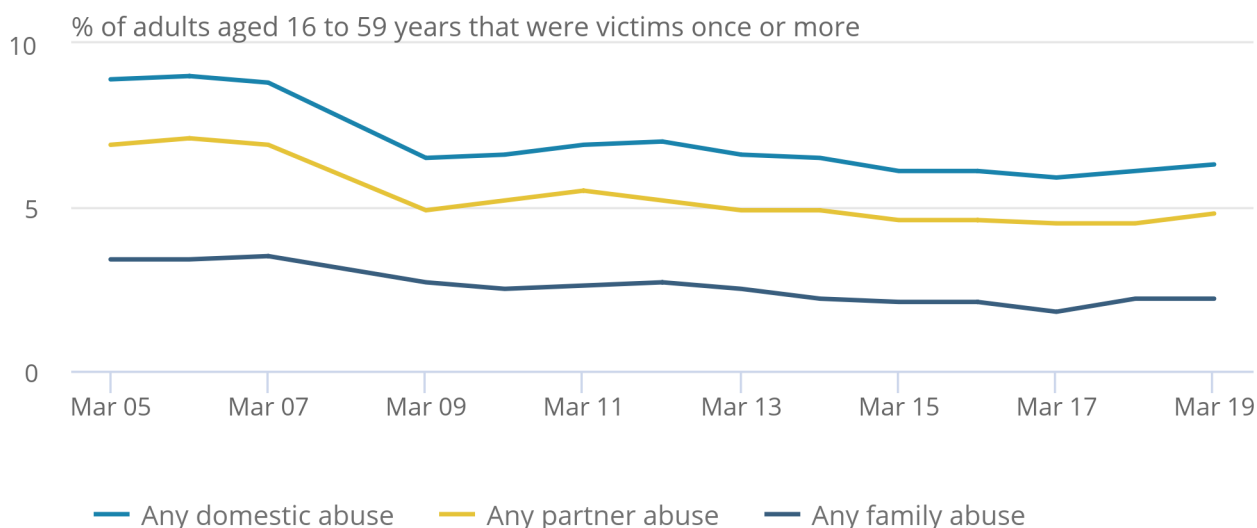
The downward trend in prevalence over time is driven by reductions in the prevalence of partner abuse, which has decreased from 6.9% to 4.8% over the same period (Figure 3). Family abuse has also followed a similar trend with a significantly lower prevalence in the year ending March 2019 (2.2%) compared with the year ending March 2005 (3.4%; [Appendix Table 4b](#)).

Figure 3: Domestic abuse estimated by the survey has not changed significantly over the last year

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, England and Wales, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2019

Figure 3: Domestic abuse estimated by the survey has not changed significantly over the last year

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, England and Wales, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2019



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

Notes:

1. No data is available for the year ending March 2008 because comparable questions on any domestic abuse, any partner abuse and any family abuse were not included in that year.
2. Partner abuse refers to abuse carried out by a partner or ex-partner.

There has been no significant change in the level of stalking (by partner, ex-partner, or family member) in the year ending March 2019 compared with the year ending March 2005 ([Appendix Table 4b](#)).

Sexual assault (including attempts) by a partner or family member has a relatively low prevalence compared with other types of domestic abuse. There has been no significant change in the prevalence of domestic sexual assault (including attempts) by a partner or by a family member in the year ending March 2019 compared with the year ending March 2005 ([Appendix Table 4b](#)).

Number of domestic abuse types experienced in the last year

Although the CSEW is a large sample survey, there are a relatively small number of victims of the different types of domestic abuse interviewed in any one year. Consequently, analysis on how many types of domestic abuse were experienced by victims has been completed on a dataset combining the three latest survey years; the year ending March 2017 to the year ending March 2019. This dataset, and therefore the following findings, report on adults aged 16 to 59 years. For more information on the age ranges used, see the [Things you need to know about this publication](#) section.

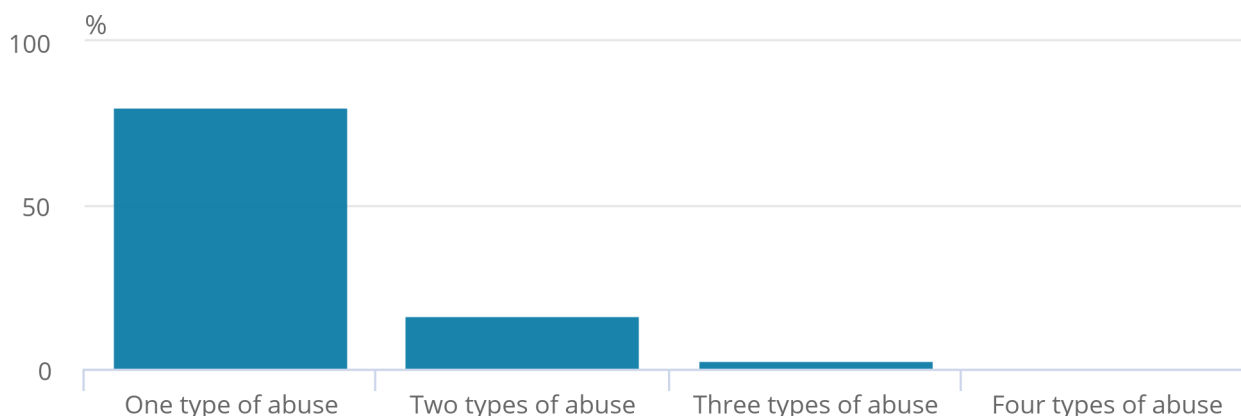
Figure 4 shows that the majority (80.3%) of domestic abuse victims aged 16 to 59 years suffered one type of abuse in the last year. In cases where one type of abuse was experienced, the most common type was non-sexual partner abuse, with 50.6% of victims experiencing this single type of abuse in the last year² ([Appendix Table 8](#)). For cases where two types of abuse were experienced, non-sexual partner abuse and stalking were the most commonly experienced combination (7.9% of victims; [Appendix Table 8](#)).

Figure 4: The majority of victims experienced one type of abuse

Number of types of abuse experienced by victims of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, England and Wales, year ending March 2017 to year ending March 2019

Figure 4: The majority of victims experienced one type of abuse

Number of types of abuse experienced by victims of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, England and Wales, year ending March 2017 to year ending March 2019



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

Notes:

1. These data are based on combined data from year ending March 2017 to year ending March 2019.
2. Data are shown for the number of abuse-types (non-sexual partner abuse, non-sexual family abuse, domestic sexual assault, domestic stalking) experienced and not the number of incidents of abuse experienced.

Prevalence of domestic abuse experienced since the age of 16 years

The year ending March 2019 CSEW showed that an estimated 8.9 million adults aged 16 to 74 years ¹ had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 years. This equates to a prevalence rate of approximately 21 in 100 adults (Figure 5).

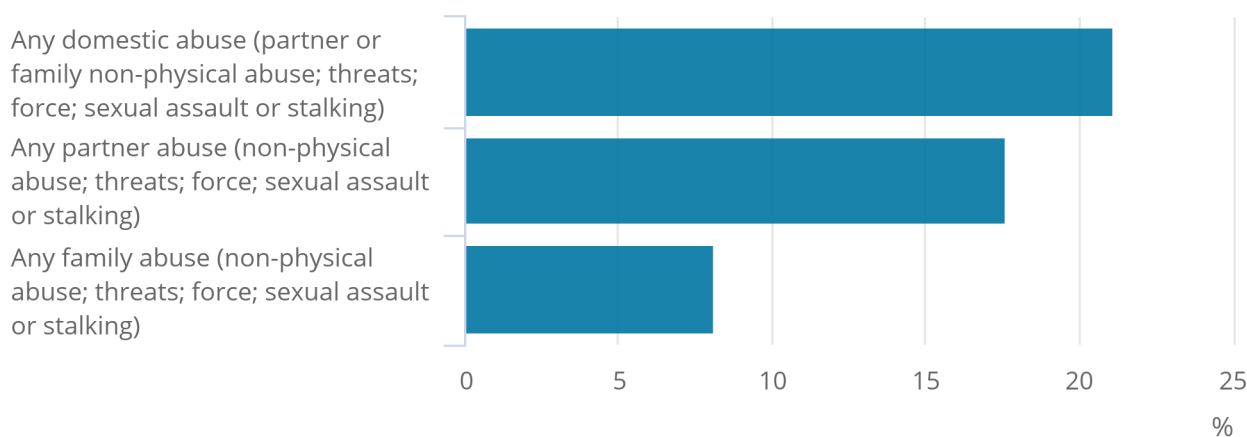
In terms of the victim relationship to the perpetrator, 17.6% of adults had experienced partner abuse since the age of 16 years, and 8.1% had experienced family abuse since the age of 16 years ([Appendix Table 1a](#)).

Figure 5: Over 20% of adults had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 years

Prevalence of domestic abuse since the age of 16 years for adults aged 16 to 74 years, by perpetrator-relationship, England and Wales, year ending March 2019

Figure 5: Over 20% of adults had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 years

Prevalence of domestic abuse since the age of 16 years for adults aged 16 to 74 years, by perpetrator-relationship, England and Wales, year ending March 2019



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

Notes:

1. Partner abuse refers to abuse carried out by a partner or ex-partner.

In terms of the types of abuse experienced since the age of 16 years, Figure 6 shows that:

- non-sexual domestic abuse was the most common type of domestic abuse experienced by adults (19.2%)
- domestic stalking was experienced by 7.3% of adults
- domestic sexual assault was experienced by 4.4% of adults ([Appendix Table 1a](#))

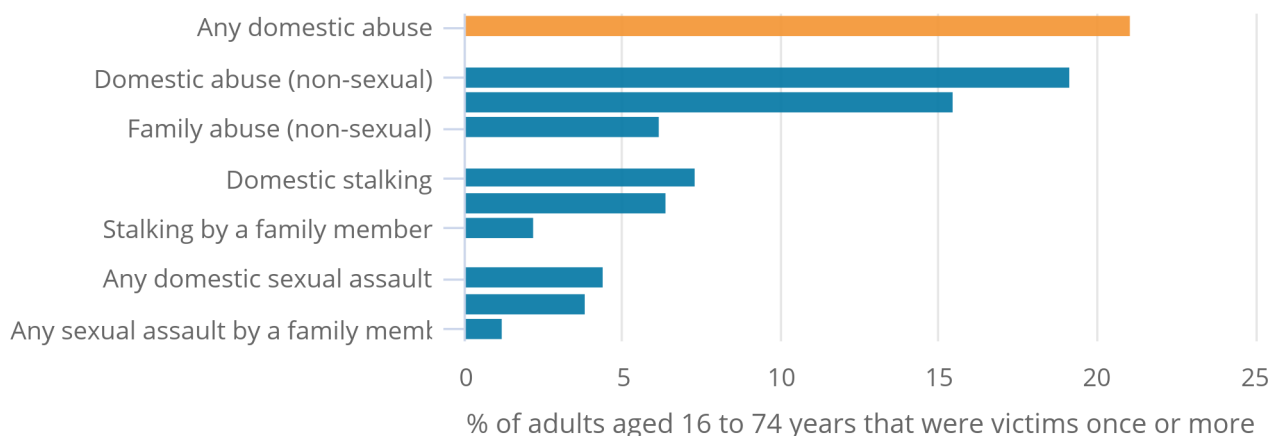
More information on sexual assault and stalking can be found in the article [Sexual offending: victimisation and the path through the criminal justice system](#) and dataset [Stalking: findings from the CSEW, year ending March 2019](#).

Figure 6: Non-sexual domestic abuse was the most commonly experienced type of abuse since the age of 16 years

Prevalence of domestic abuse since the age of 16 years for adults aged 16 to 74 years, by type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending March 2019

Figure 6: Non-sexual domestic abuse was the most commonly experienced type of abuse since the age of 16 years

Prevalence of domestic abuse since the age of 16 years for adults aged 16 to 74 years, by type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending March 2019



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

Notes:

1. Chapter 5 of the [User guide](#) provides definitions of the various types of domestic abuse.
2. Sexual assault categories include attempts.
3. Abuse carried out by a partner includes abuse carried out by an ex-partner.
4. 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.

Notes for: Crime Survey for England and Wales shows no change in domestic abuse prevalence

1. The age range for respondents eligible for the self-completion module was expanded in April 2017, changing from adults aged 16 to 59 years to adults aged 16 to 74 years. This publication reports primarily on those aged 16 to 74 years, for which we currently have two years of data. Where analysis requires more than the last two years of data, we have reported using the 16 to 59 years age range. Data for both 16 to 59 years and 16 to 74 years are provided separately within the [Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics – Appendix Tables](#).
2. For the three-year dataset, “in the last year” refers to the 12 months prior to interview and covers a four-year recall period from April 2016 to March 2019.

5 . Police recorded crime data show an increase in domestic abuse-related crimes

There were a total of 1,316,800 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes¹ 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 ([Appendix Table 9](#)).

Some of this increase may be, in part, driven by general police improvements in offence-recording practices, as well as an increase in domestic abuse-related incidents coming to the attention of the police. The increase could also indicate an increased willingness of victims to come forward to report domestic abuse⁴. This reasoning is supported by the contrasting findings in the Crime Survey of no change in victim numbers (see section on [Crime Survey for England and Wales shows no change in domestic abuse prevalence](#) for more information).

Information on the characteristics of victims of domestic abuse-related crimes can be found in the [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, year ending March 2019](#) publication.

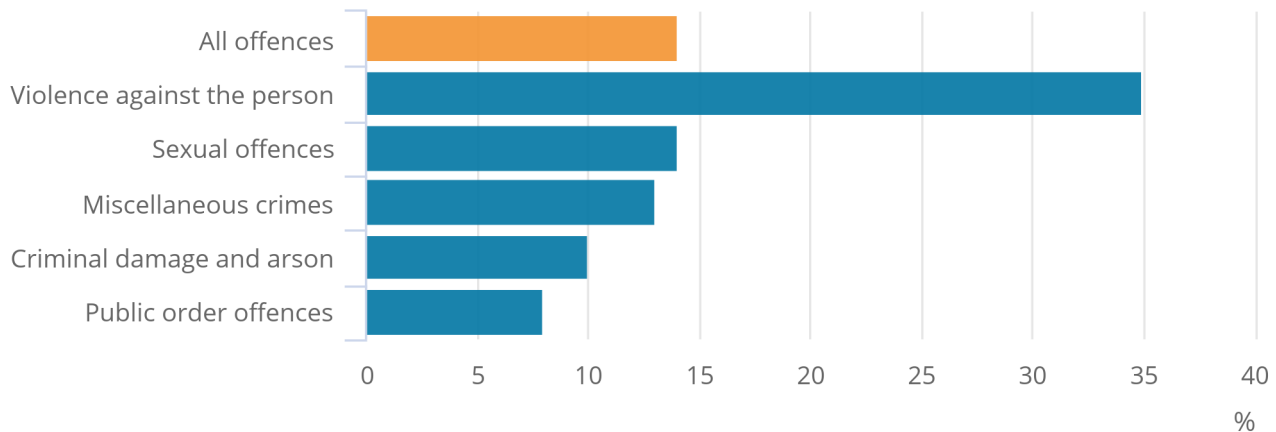
Just over one-third (35%) of the 1,671,039 violence against the person offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2019 were domestic abuse-related ([Appendix Table 13b](#)). Sexual offences had the second highest proportion with 14% of the 162,030 recorded offences being domestic abuse-related (Figure 7).

Figure 7: The offence group with the highest proportion of domestic abuse-related crimes was violence against the person

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 7: The offence group with the highest proportion of domestic abuse-related crimes was violence against the person

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.

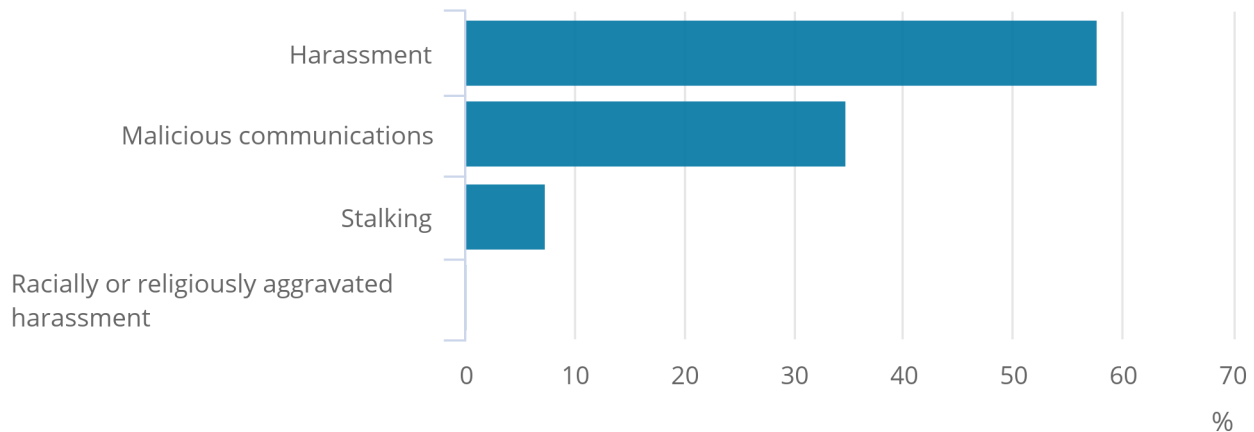
The police recorded 166,472 domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences in the year ending March 2019⁴, accounting for just over one-fifth (22%) of all domestic abuse-related crimes in that year ([Appendix Table 17](#)). The majority of domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences fell within the harassment sub-group category (58%), followed by malicious communications (35%; Figure 8).

Figure 8: The majority of domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences were in the harassment sub-group

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 8: The majority of domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences were in the harassment sub-group

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.

Domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences made up over one-third of all stalking and harassment offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2019 (37%, see [Appendix Table 18](#)). This proportion varied by police force area. For more information please see the [Domestic abuse statistics – data tool](#).

Controlling or coercive behaviour

There were 17,616 offences of coercive control recorded by the police in the year ending March 2019, compared with 9,053 in the year ending March 2018 ([Appendix Table 19](#)). Such increases are common for new offences and the rise could be attributed to improvements in recognising incidents of coercive control by the police and using the new law accordingly.

Domestic homicide

There were 366 domestic homicides recorded by the police in England and Wales between April 2016 and March 2018. This represents 20% of all homicides where the victim was aged 16 years and over during this time period ([Appendix Table 20](#)). Information on the characteristics of victims of domestic homicide can be found in the [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, year ending March 2019](#) publication.

Notes for: Police recorded crime data show an increase in domestic abuse-related crimes

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 is recorded and then a crime subsequently 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. Once every three years the Crime Survey for England and Wales asks further questions on the circumstance of partner abuse experienced. The latest figures showed no significant difference in the total proportion of victims of partner abuse who told the police about the abuse they experienced in the year ending March 2018 compared with the year ending March 2015. However, these figures do not represent all victims of domestic abuse. We're planning a full review of the domestic abuse questions in the Crime Survey. This will consider how we can ask victims of domestic abuse about who they reported their experience to.

6 . 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](#).

7 . Annex 1: Measuring domestic abuse

How is domestic abuse measured within the Crime Survey for England and Wales?

There are two headline measures of domestic abuse in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW): one relates to experiences since the age of 16 years and the other is limited to those experiences in the 12 months prior to interview.

For the self-completion section of the survey (which includes questions on domestic abuse), respondents are handed a tablet computer to use to answer questions. This allows respondents to feel more at ease when answering these sensitive questions, because of increased confidence in the privacy and confidentiality of the survey.

The face-to-face component of the survey does ask about one element of domestic abuse: incidents of violence (physical abuse, not including threats). This is referred to as “domestic violence”. It is a narrower definition than asked about in the self-completion section which covers non-physical abuse, physical abuse (including threats or force), sexual assault and stalking. This partly explains why the prevalence of domestic abuse reported in the self-completion module is significantly higher than the prevalence of domestic violence reported in the face-to-face interview.

Further analysis shows that there is a higher level of reporting of force in the CSEW self-completion module than in the face-to-face module. Of those aged 16 to 74 years who reported being victims of force in the last 12 months in the self-completion module, only 18.7% reported being a victim of domestic violence in face-to-face interviews (24.6% for women and 10.2% for men). The self-completion module therefore provides a more complete and accurate measure of domestic abuse victimisation. As there are several differences between the coverage and quality of the self-completion and face-to-face estimates, care should be taken when making comparisons between the two.

The CSEW estimates do not completely capture the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship, which was introduced on 29 December 2015. New survey questions to better estimate experiences of this type of abuse are still under development. Details of the research carried out to date can be found in the article on [Developing a measure of controlling or coercive behaviour](#).

How do the police measure domestic abuse?

With the exception of coercive or controlling 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. More information on domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes can be found in the publication [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system](#).

Home Office Homicide Index

The Home Office Homicide Index provides data on whether homicides² are “domestic”³. The Homicide Index contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales. It is continually updated with revised information from the police and the courts and, as such, is a richer source of data than the main recorded crime dataset⁴.

Homicide Index data are based on the year when the offence was recorded, not when the offence took place or when the case was heard in court. While in the vast majority of cases the offence will be recorded in the same year as it took place, this is not always the case. The data refer to the position as at 8 December 2018, when the Homicide Index database was “frozen” for the purpose of analysis⁵. The data may change as subsequent court hearings take place or as other information is received.

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

Notes for: Annex 1: Measuring domestic abuse

1. In response to a recommendation in the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) 2014 report [Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse](#), police forces are asked to "flag" crimes as being domestic abuse-related if the offence meets the government definition of domestic violence and abuse.
2. Homicide includes the offences of murder, manslaughter, corporate manslaughter and infanticide.
3. Homicides are recorded to be "domestic" when 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, other relatives.
4. For example, when the police initially record an offence as a homicide it remains classified as such unless the police or courts decide that a lesser offence, or no offence, took place. The offence would be reclassified on the Homicide Index as "no longer recorded" but remain in the main police recorded crime collection as a homicide.
5. The Homicide Index is continually updated with revised information from the police as investigations continue and as cases are heard by the courts. The version used for analysis does not accept updates after it is "frozen" to ensure the data do not change during the analysis period. See Section 3.1 of the [User guide to crime statistics](#) for more information.