

Article

# Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2019

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

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# 1 . Main points

According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2019:

- an estimated 7.5% of women (1.6 million) and 3.8% of men (786,000) experienced domestic abuse in the last year
- women aged 20 to 24 years were more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last year than women aged 25 years and over
- adults who were separated or divorced were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse compared with those who were married or civil partnered, cohabiting, single or widowed
- adults who lived in urban areas were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year (6.0%) than those who lived in rural areas (4.2%)

In 75% of the domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police in the year ending March 2019, the victim was female.

Between the year ending March 2016 and the year ending March 2018, 74% of victims of domestic homicide were female compared with 13% of victims of non-domestic homicide.

## 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, by personal and household characteristics, from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)
- numbers of domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes, by sex and age, recorded by the police
- numbers of domestic homicides recorded by the police by sex, age and relationship to perpetrator

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 CSEW<sup>1</sup>. 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
- stalking<sup>1</sup>: two or more incidents (causing distress, fear or alarm) of receiving obscene or threatening unwanted letters, emails, text messages or phone calls, having had obscene or threatening information about them placed on the internet, waiting or loitering around home or workplace, or following or watching<sup>2</sup>

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 controlling<sup>3</sup>, coercive<sup>4</sup>, 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 be in line with the legal definition of two or more incidents 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 . Sex

For the year ending March 2019, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 1.6 million women and 786,000 men aged 16 to 74<sup>1</sup> years experienced domestic abuse in the last year ([Appendix Table 2a](#)). This equates to a prevalence rate of approximately 7 in 100 women and 4 in 100 men (Figure 1).

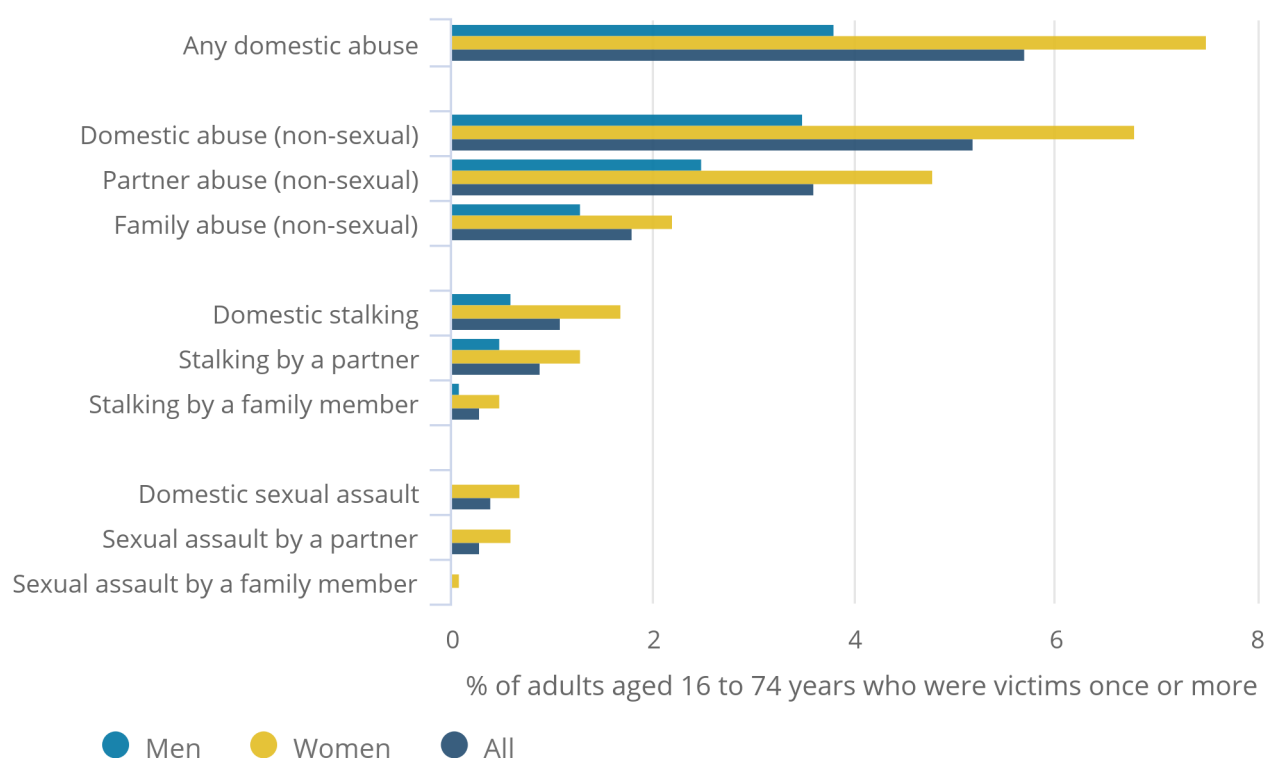
Figure 1 shows that women were more likely to be victims of each type of abuse (except sexual assault by a family member) than men. For example, 6.8% of females aged 16 to 74 years were victims of non-sexual domestic abuse in the last year, compared with 3.5% of males. Similarly, 1.7% of females aged 16 to 74 years were victims of domestic stalking in the last year, compared with 0.6% of males.

## Figure 1: Women were more likely than men to be victims of domestic abuse in the last year

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

### Figure 1: Women were more likely than men to be victims of domestic abuse in the last year

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



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

#### Notes:

1. Sexual assault categories includes attempts.
2. The sum of the overarching domestic abuse categories are not the sum of the sub-categories as victims who have experienced more than one type of abuse will be included in multiple categories.

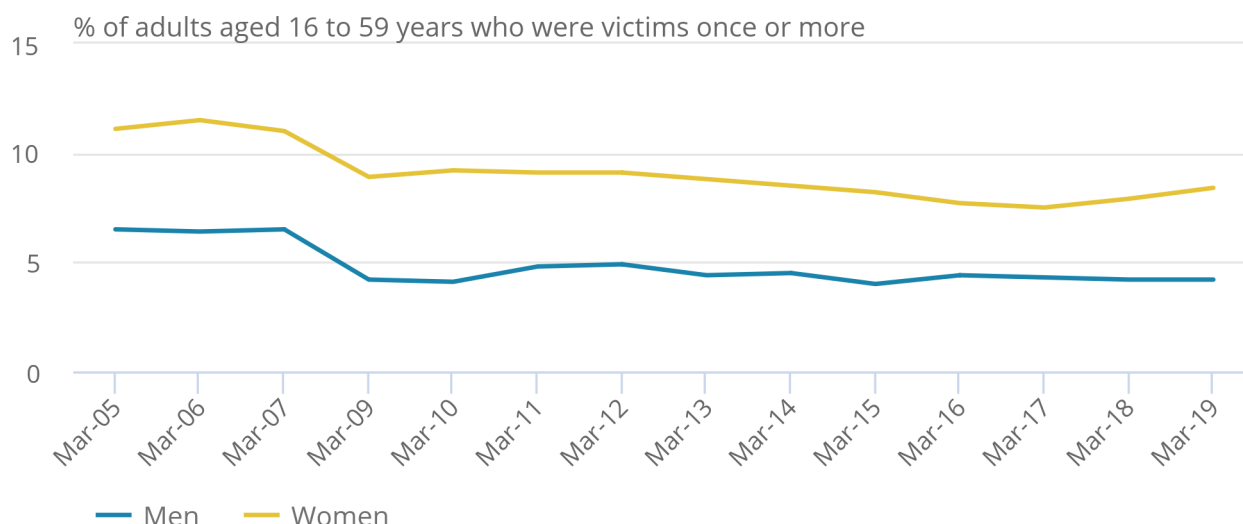
There was no significant difference in the prevalence of any domestic abuse for men and women aged 16 to 74 years in the year ending March 2019 compared with the year ending March 2018. When looking at longer-term trends, the prevalence of domestic abuse for men and women aged 16 to 59 years for the year ending March 2019 was significantly lower than that reported for the year ending March 2005 (Figure 2). For example, 4.2% of men aged 16 to 59 years had experienced domestic abuse within the last year in the year ending March 2019, compared with 6.5% of men in the year ending March 2005. Similarly, 8.4% of women aged 16 to 59 years had experienced domestic abuse within the last year in the year ending March 2019, compared with 11.1% of women in the year ending March 2005.

## Figure 2: There was no change in the prevalence of domestic abuse for both men and women in the last year

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

### Figure 2: There was no change in the prevalence of domestic abuse for both men and women in the last year

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by sex, 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 point is available for the year ending March 2008 because comparable questions on stalking, an offence that makes up the domestic abuse category, were not included in that year.

Domestic abuse-related crimes by sex of victims have been analysed using data from the Home Office Data Hub<sup>2</sup>. There were 29 forces that supplied data for sex in the year ending March 2019<sup>3</sup>.

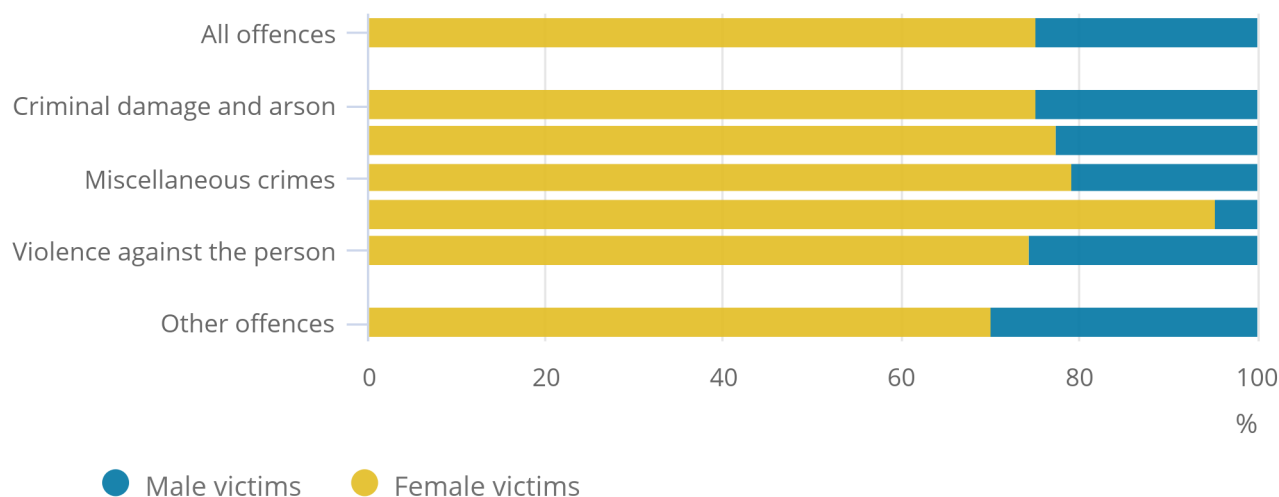
In three-quarters of domestic abuse-related crimes the victim was female (75%). This proportion was similar for the majority of offence categories, but for domestic abuse-related sexual offences the proportion of victims that were female was even higher, at 96% (Figure 3).

### Figure 3: There were more female than male victims of domestic abuse-related crimes

Percentage of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police by sex of the victim and selected offence groups (29 forces), England and Wales, year ending March 2019

#### Figure 3: There were more female than male victims of domestic abuse-related crimes

Percentage of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police by sex of the victim and selected offence groups (29 forces), 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 29 forces with adequate data.

For female victims of violence against the person, 55% of offences were flagged as domestic abuse-related. In contrast, for male victims of violence against the person, 23% of offences were flagged as domestic abuse-related. These figures are from 27 forces who supplied data<sup>4</sup> in the year ending March 2019.

#### Notes for: Sex

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. This is an improved record-level data collection system designed to streamline the process by which forces submit data. Migration of forces to the Data Hub is ongoing.
3. Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire, British Transport Police, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, City of London, Cleveland, Derbyshire, Devon and Cornwall, Durham, Dyfed-Powys, Essex, Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester, Gwent, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire, Metropolitan Police, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley and West Mercia.
4. The analysis may not be representative of all forces in England and Wales, however, for these 27 forces, the proportion of violence against the person offences that were flagged as domestic abuse-related was 34%, similar to all forces (35%).

## 5 . Age

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2019 showed that women aged 20 to 24 years were significantly more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last year than women aged 25 years and over (Figure 4). For men, there were few significant differences by age, however those aged 60 to 74 years were less likely to be victims of domestic abuse in the last year than those in most other age groups.

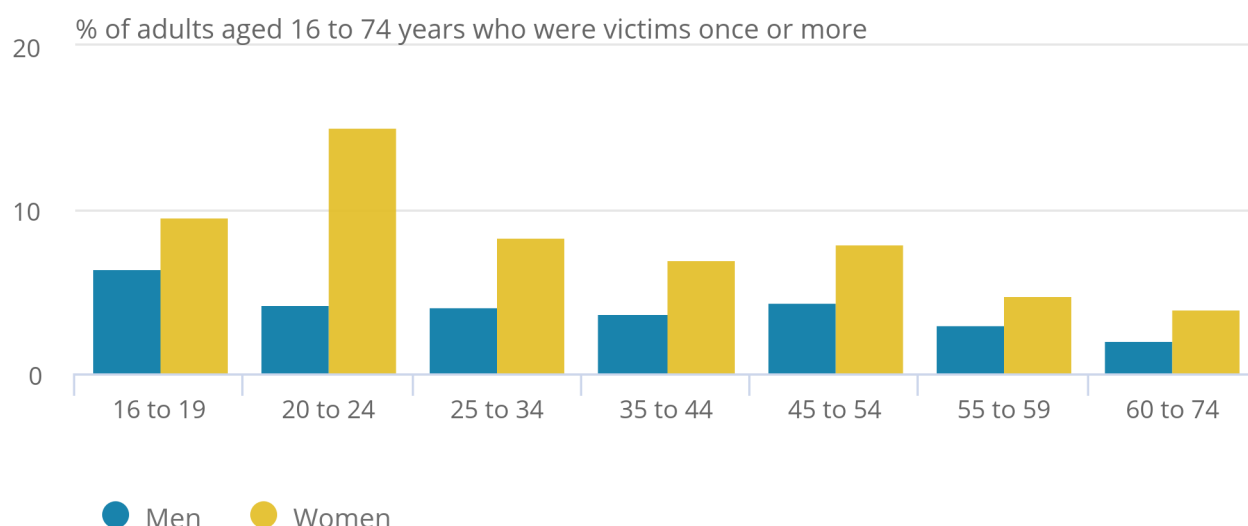


#### Figure 4: Women aged 20 to 24 years were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse than women aged 25 years and over

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

#### Figure 4: Women aged 20 to 24 years were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse than women aged 25 years and over

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



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

#### Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Based on 29 forces with adequate data.

Domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police by age of victims have been analysed using data from the Home Office Data Hub<sup>1</sup>. There were 27 forces that supplied age data in the year ending March 2019<sup>2</sup>.

For female victims of violence against the person offences flagged as domestic abuse-related, as age increased, the proportion of offences that were domestic abuse-related tended to decline (Figure 5). For women aged 25 to 29 years, 59% of all police recorded violence was domestic abuse-related, compared with 40% for those aged 75 years and over.

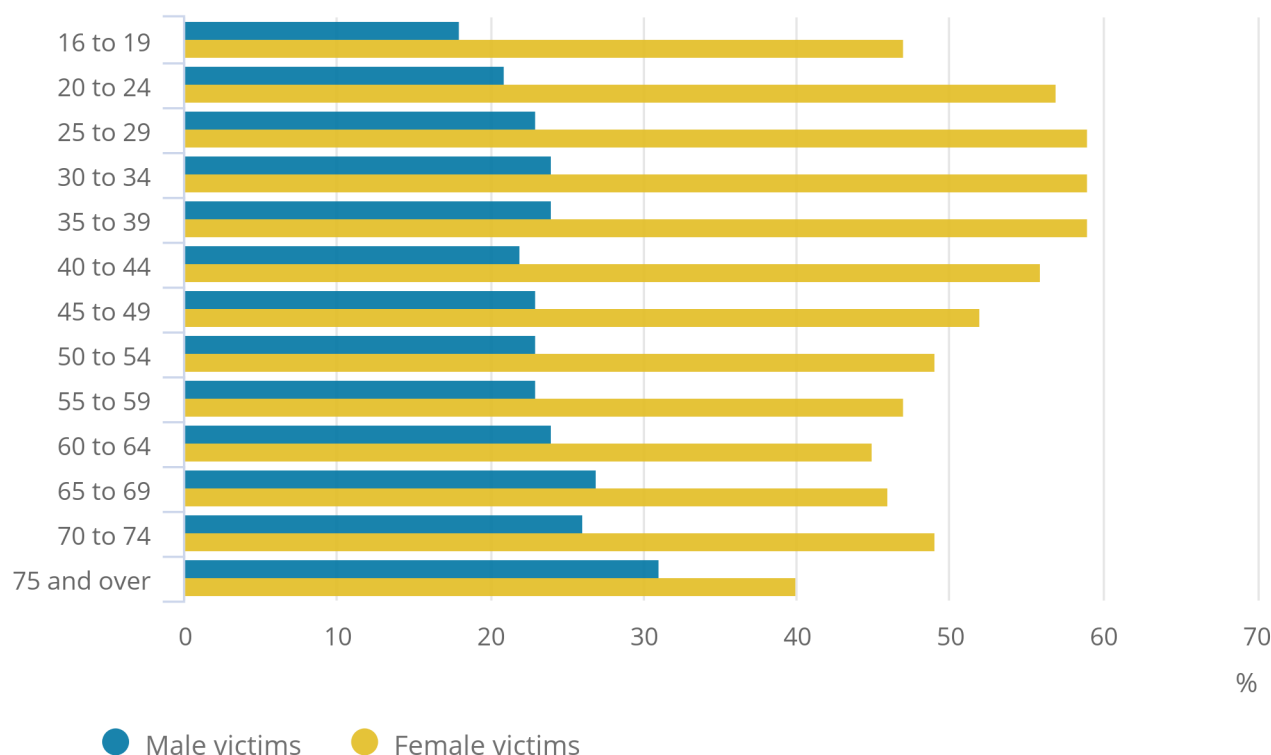
In contrast, among men, the proportion of violent offences that were domestic abuse-related tended to increase with age, from 18% for 16- to 19-year-olds to 31% for those aged 75 years and over (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Violence against the person offences flagged as domestic abuse-related varied by age**

Percentage of violence against the person offences recorded by the police that were flagged as domestic abuse-related, by age, England and Wales, year ending March 2019

## Figure 5: Violence against the person offences flagged as domestic abuse-related varied by age

Percentage of violence against the person offences recorded by the police that were flagged as domestic abuse-related, by age, 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 27 forces with adequate data.

### Notes for: Age

1. This is an improved record-level data collection system designed to streamline the process by which forces submit data. Migration of forces to the Data Hub is ongoing.
2. Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire, British Transport Police, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, City of London, Cleveland, Derbyshire, Dyfed-Powys, Essex, Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester, Gwent, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire, Metropolitan Police, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley and West Mercia.

## 6 . Ethnicity

For the year ending March 2019, the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) showed that those in the Mixed ethnic group were more likely than those in the White or Asian ethnic groups to experience domestic abuse within the last year (Figure 6).

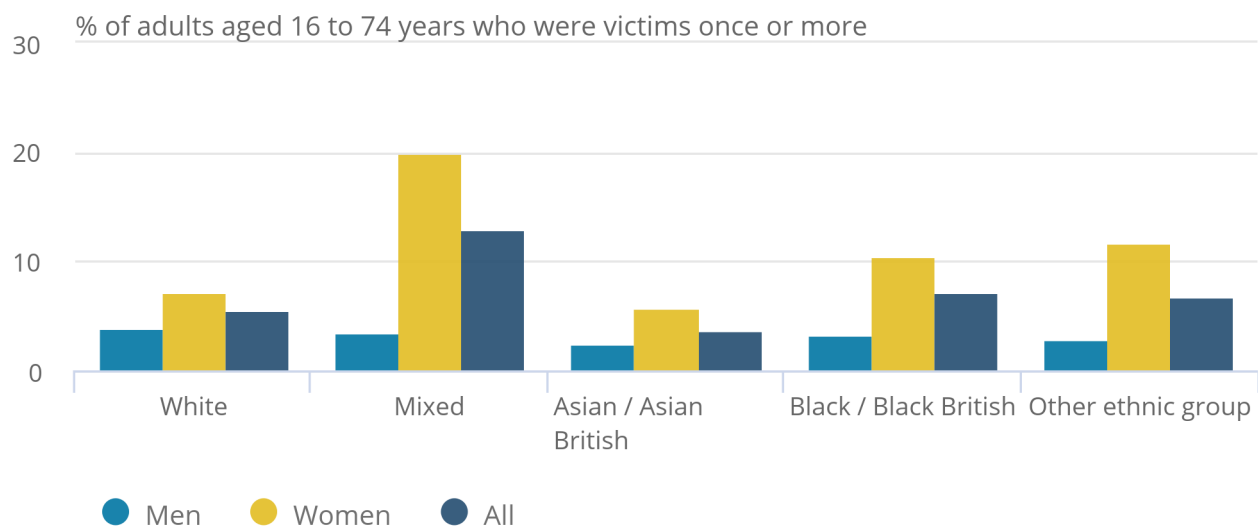
In the White, Mixed and Black ethnic groups, women were significantly more likely than men to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year. This difference was greatest for the Mixed ethnic group (20.0% of women, compared with 3.5% of men; [Appendix Table 6a](#)).

**Figure 6: People of Mixed ethnicity were more likely to experience domestic abuse than people of White or Asian ethnicity**

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

Figure 6: People of Mixed ethnicity were more likely to experience domestic abuse than people of White or Asian ethnicity

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



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

For partner abuse, the highest prevalence was seen for those in the Mixed ethnic group. For family abuse there was no difference by ethnicity<sup>1</sup>.

### Notes for: Ethnicity

1. Caution should be taken when using these data as some of the categories are based on a small number of responses.

## 7 . Marital status

For the year ending March 2019, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that adults aged 16 to 74 years who were separated or divorced were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse than those who were married or civil partnered, cohabiting, single or widowed <sup>1</sup>.

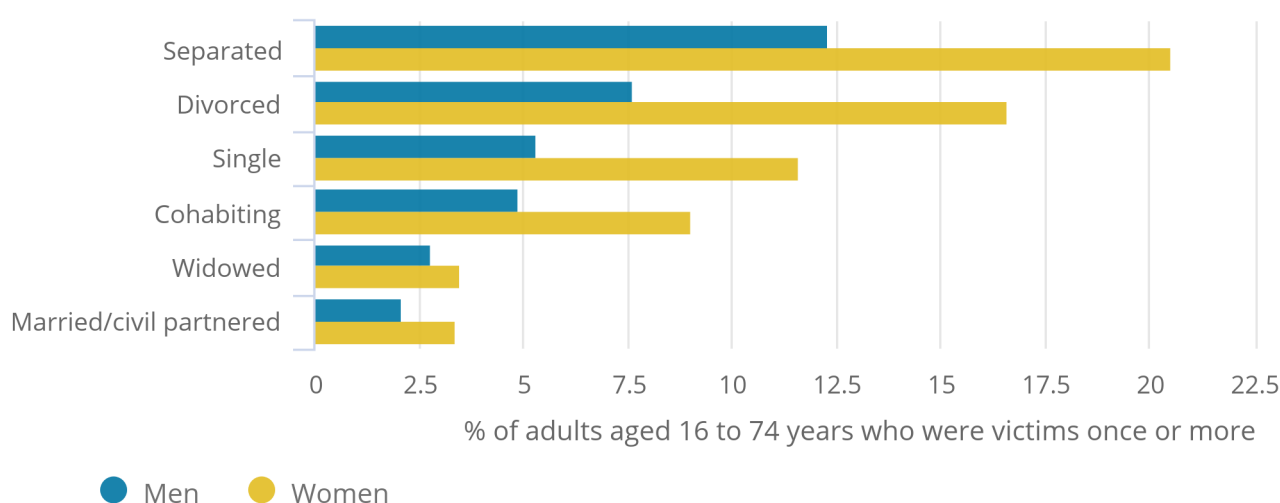
Both men and women who were married or civil partnered were less likely to be victims of domestic abuse in the last year than those who were single, cohabiting, separated or divorced. Over 3% of married or civil partnered women were victims of domestic abuse, compared with 2.1% of married or civil partnered men (Figure 7). In contrast 11.6% of single women were victims compared with 5.3% of men.

### Figure 7: Separated or divorced people were more likely to experience domestic abuse

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 74 years, by marital status and sex, England and Wales, year ending March 2019

#### Figure 7: Separated or divorced people were more likely to experience domestic abuse

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 74 years, by marital status and sex, England and Wales, year ending March 2019



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

#### Notes:

1. Figures for widowed men are not included as the sample size is below 50.

#### Notes for: Marital status

1. Marital status may have changed as a result of the abuse.

## 8 . Disability

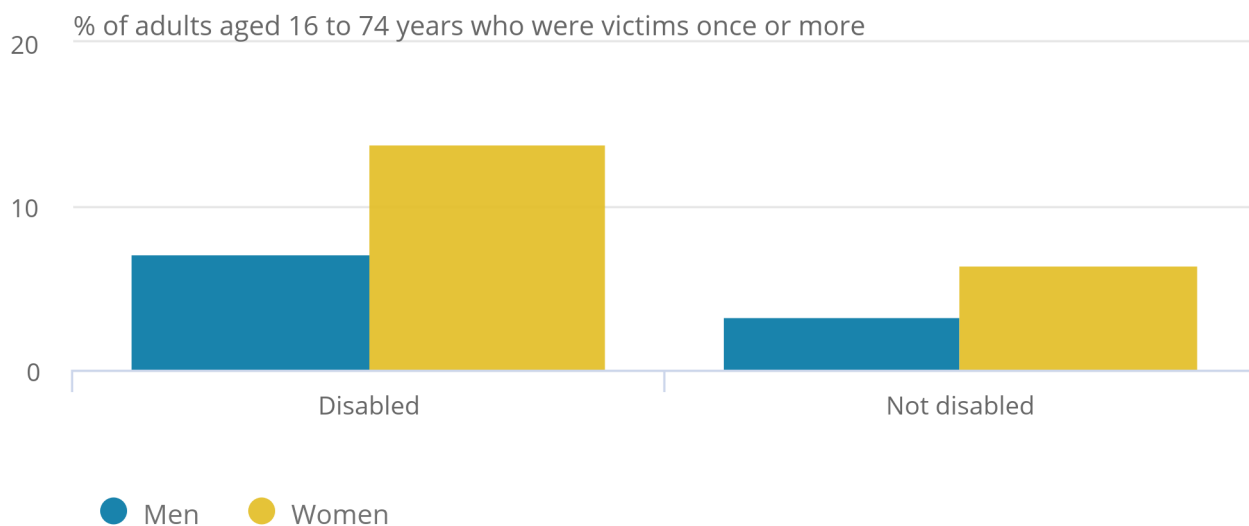
For the year ending March 2019, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that adults aged 16 to 74 years with a disability were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without (Figure 8). This was true for both men (7.1% compared with 3.3%, respectively) and women (13.8% compared with 6.4%, respectively)<sup>1</sup>.

**Figure 8: Those with a disability were more likely to experience domestic abuse than those without**

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

### Figure 8: Those with a disability were more likely to experience domestic abuse than those without

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



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

**Notes:**

1. The definition of disability used is consistent with the core definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010. A person is considered to have a disability if they have a long-standing illness, disability or impairment which causes difficulty with day-to-day activities.

### Notes for: Disability

1. The definition of disability used is consistent with the core definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010. A person is considered to have a disability if they have a long-standing illness, disability or impairment which causes difficulty with day-to-day activities.

## 9 . Employment status and occupation

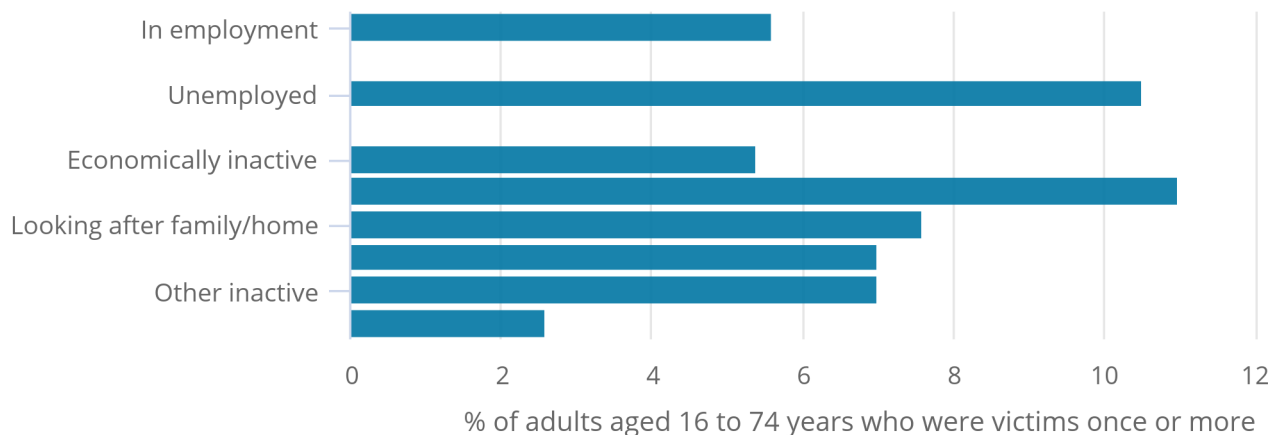
For the year ending March 2019, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that, of adults aged 16 to 74 years, those who were unemployed were almost twice as likely to have experienced domestic abuse within the last year than those who were employed or economically inactive (Figure 9; [Appendix Table 6a](#))<sup>1</sup>.

**Figure 9: Unemployed people were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse than those who were employed or economically inactive**

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

Figure 9: Unemployed people were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse than those who were employed or economically inactive

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



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

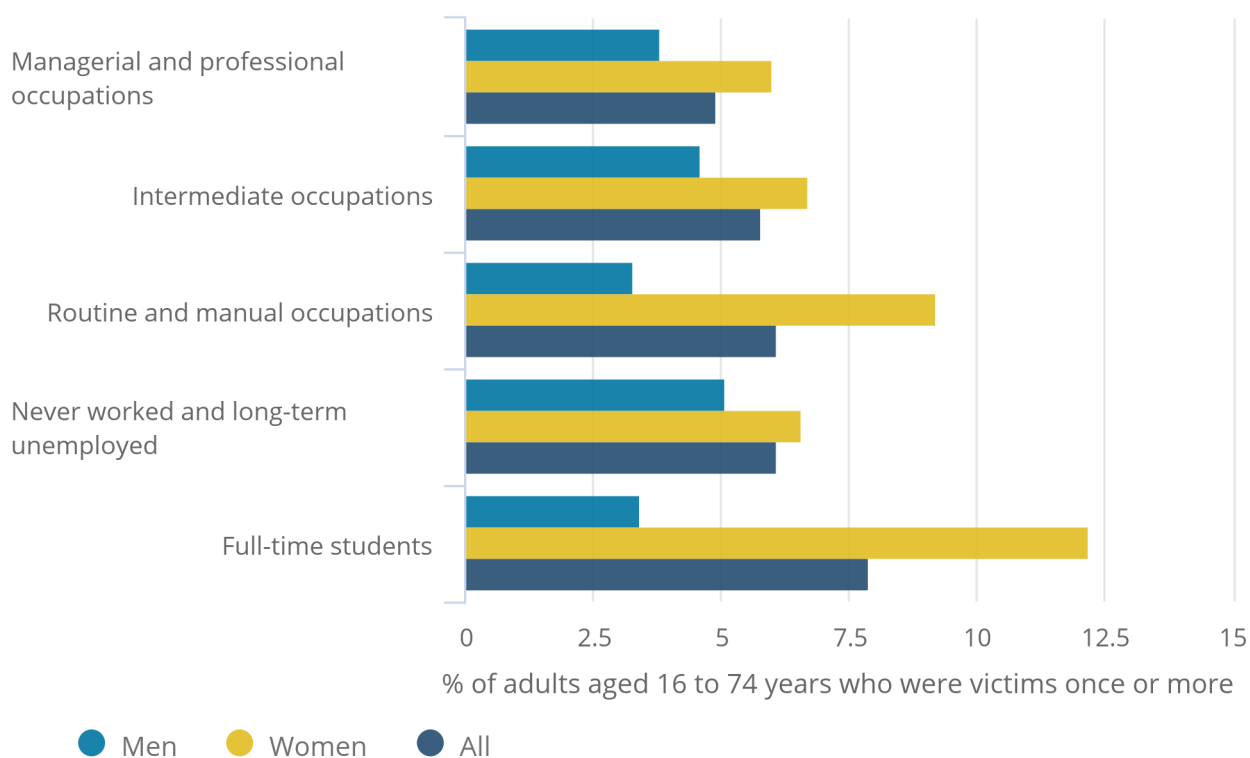
Figure 10 shows that of adults aged 16 to 74 years, for each occupation type except Never worked/long-term unemployed, women were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse than men. This difference was greatest for full-time students where 12.2% of women had experienced domestic abuse in the last year, compared with 3.4% of men. It is likely that some of the differences seen by occupation type are also linked to age.

## Figure 10: Women were more likely to experience domestic abuse than men within most occupational groups

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

### Figure 10: Women were more likely to experience domestic abuse than men within most occupational groups

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



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

#### Notes for: Employment status and occupation

1. Employment status and occupation may have changed as a result of the abuse.

## 10 . Household structure

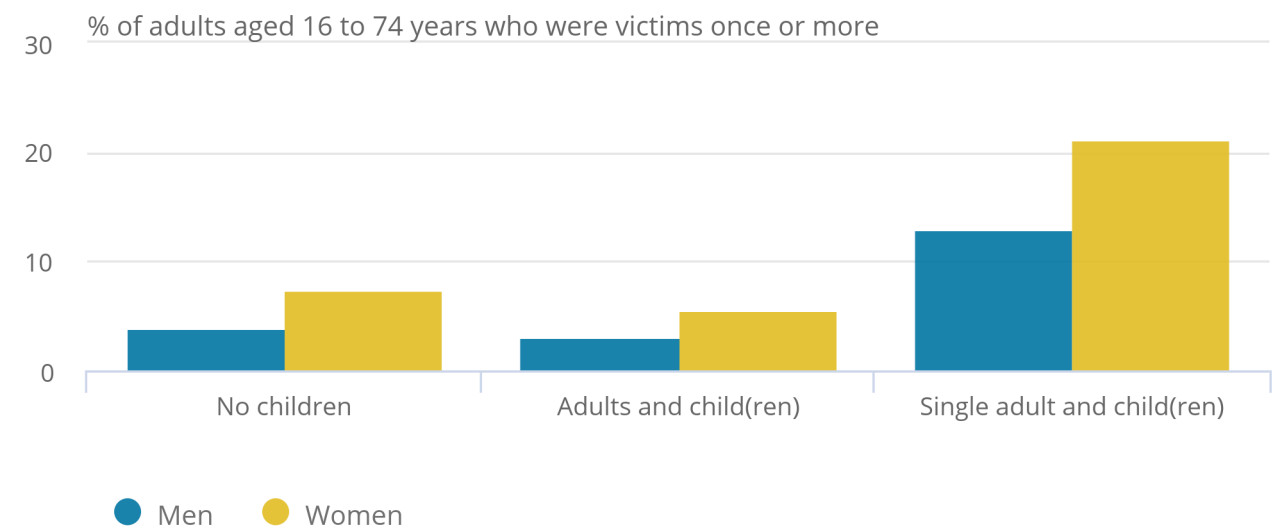
The year ending March 2019 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that, of men and women aged 16 to 74 years, those who lived in a single-parent household were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those living in a no-children household or a household with other adults and children (Figure 11 and [Appendix Table 7a](#))<sup>1</sup>.

**Figure 11: Those living in a single-parent household were more likely to experience domestic abuse**

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

**Figure 11: Those living in a single-parent household were more likely to experience domestic abuse**

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



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

**Notes for: Household structure**

- 1. Household structure may have changed as a result of the abuse.

**11 . Area**

The year ending March 2019 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that, of adults aged 16 to 74 years, those who lived in urban areas were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year (6.0%) than those who lived in rural areas (4.2%; [Appendix Table 7a](#))<sup>1</sup>.

Women were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse compared with men within the last year for all area types <sup>2</sup> (except Ethnicity central and Urbanites where apparent differences were not significant). This pattern is largest for Constrained city dwellers where 12.5% of women were victims of domestic abuse in the last year, compared with 3.6% of men (Figure 12).

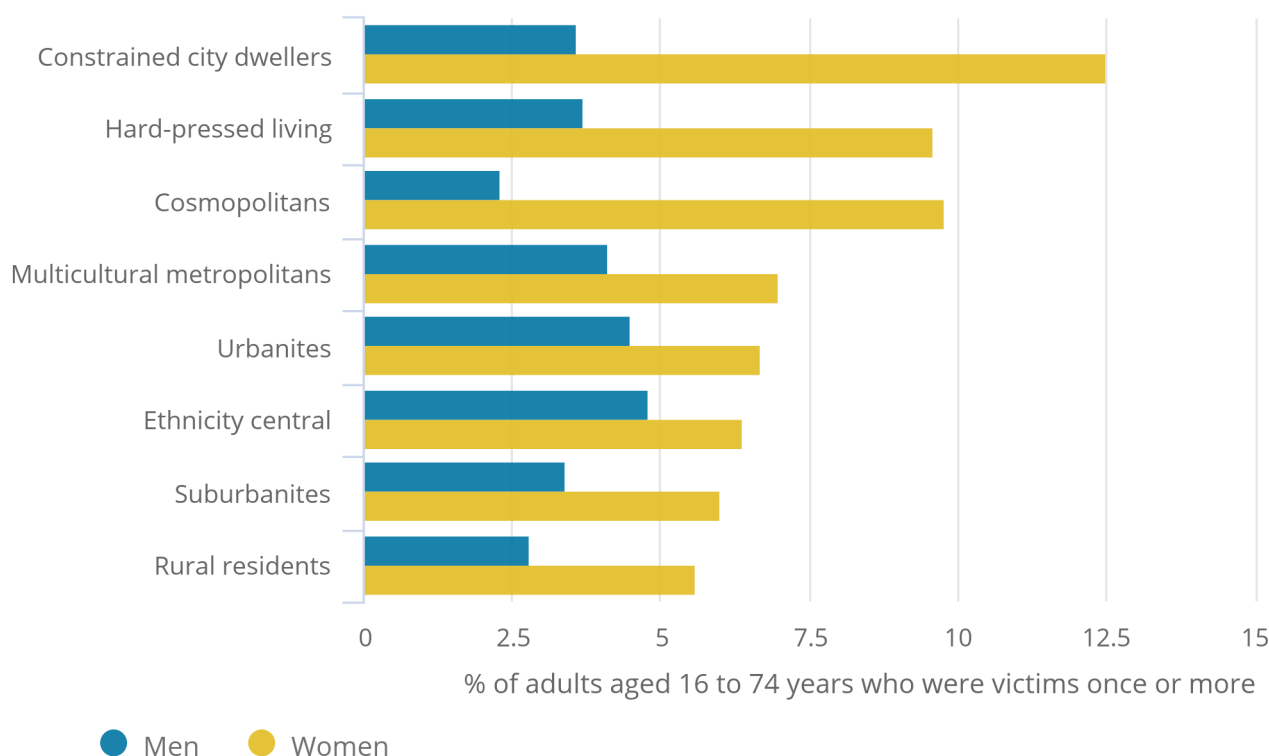


**Figure 12: Women were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse within all area types (except Ethnicity central and Urbanities) than men**

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

**Figure 12: Women were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse within all area types (except Ethnicity central and Urbanities) than men**

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



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

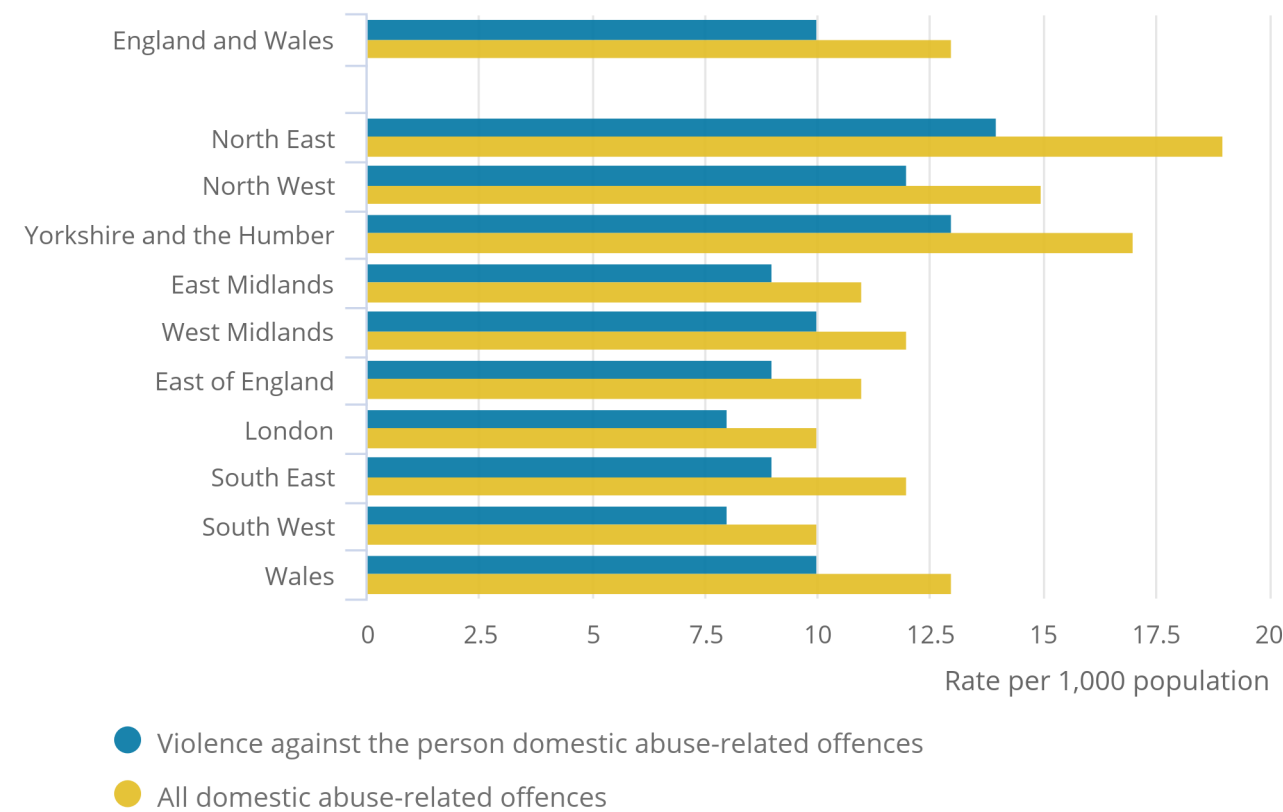
Looking at offences recorded by the police, Figure 13 shows that the highest rates of both domestic abuse-related crimes and violence against the person domestic abuse-related crimes were recorded in the North East region (with a rate of 19 per 1,000 population and 14 per 1,000 population; respectively). The lowest rates of domestic abuse-related crimes and violence against the person domestic-abuse related offences were recorded in both London and the South West (with a rate of 10 per 1,000 population for all domestic abuse-related crimes and 8 per 1,000 population for violence against the person domestic-abuse related offences). Although this could reflect differences in the rates of domestic abuse across regions, it could also reflect regional differences in the reporting of domestic abuse to the police and how the police subsequently record these offences.

**Figure 13: The North East of England had the highest recorded rates of domestic abuse-related crimes**

Rate of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police, by region, England and Wales, year ending March 2019

**Figure 13: The North East of England had the highest recorded rates of domestic abuse-related crimes**

Rate of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police, by region, 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. The population figures used are the mid-2018 population estimates provided by the Office for National Statistics.
3. Numbers will be affected by the size of the resident population relative to the transient or visiting populations and may therefore over-represent the number of crimes relative to the real population of potential victims.
4. Total rate for England and Wales includes offences recorded by British Transport Police.

Notes for: Area

1. Area may have changed as a result of the abuse.
2. Information on the different area types can be found in the Output Area section of the [2011 residential-based area classifications](#).

## 12 . Domestic homicide

### Sex

Data from the Home Office Homicide Index for the year ending March 2016 to the year ending March 2018 show that the majority of victims of domestic homicide were female (74% or 270). This contrasts with non-domestic homicides where the majority of victims were male (87% or 849).

Table 1 shows that of the 270 female victims of domestic homicide for the year ending March 2016 to the year ending March 2018, the suspect<sup>1</sup> was male in the majority of cases (260). Of the 96 male victims of domestic homicide in the same timeframe, the suspect was female in 46 cases, and male in 50 cases.

Table 1: Number of domestic homicide victims by sex of victim and sex of suspect  
Combined data for year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2018<sup>1</sup>, England and Wales

	Victims of domestic homicides		
	Male	Female	All
Male suspects	50	260	310
Female suspects	46	9	55
All suspects <sup>2,3</sup>	96	270	366

Source: Home Office – Homicide Index

#### Notes

1. As at 8 December 2018; figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts or as further information becomes available. [Back to table](#)
2. Includes one homicide with no suspect details. [Back to table](#)
3. A suspect in a homicide case is defined as either: a person who has been arrested in respect of an offence initially classified as homicide and charged with homicide, including those who were subsequently convicted or a person who is suspected by the police of having committed the offence but is known to have died or committed suicide prior to arrest or being charged. [Back to table](#)

Data on the number of domestic homicides by sex can be broken down by police force area but there is considerable volatility in these numbers over time because of the relatively low volumes involved. See [Appendix Table 20](#) for more information.

### Age

Analysis of data from the Homicide Index for the year ending March 2016 to the year ending March 2018 showed that the average age of a domestic homicide victim was 47 years. The average age of female domestic homicide victims was 46 years, and the average age of male domestic homicide victims was 51 years ( [Appendix Table 21](#)).

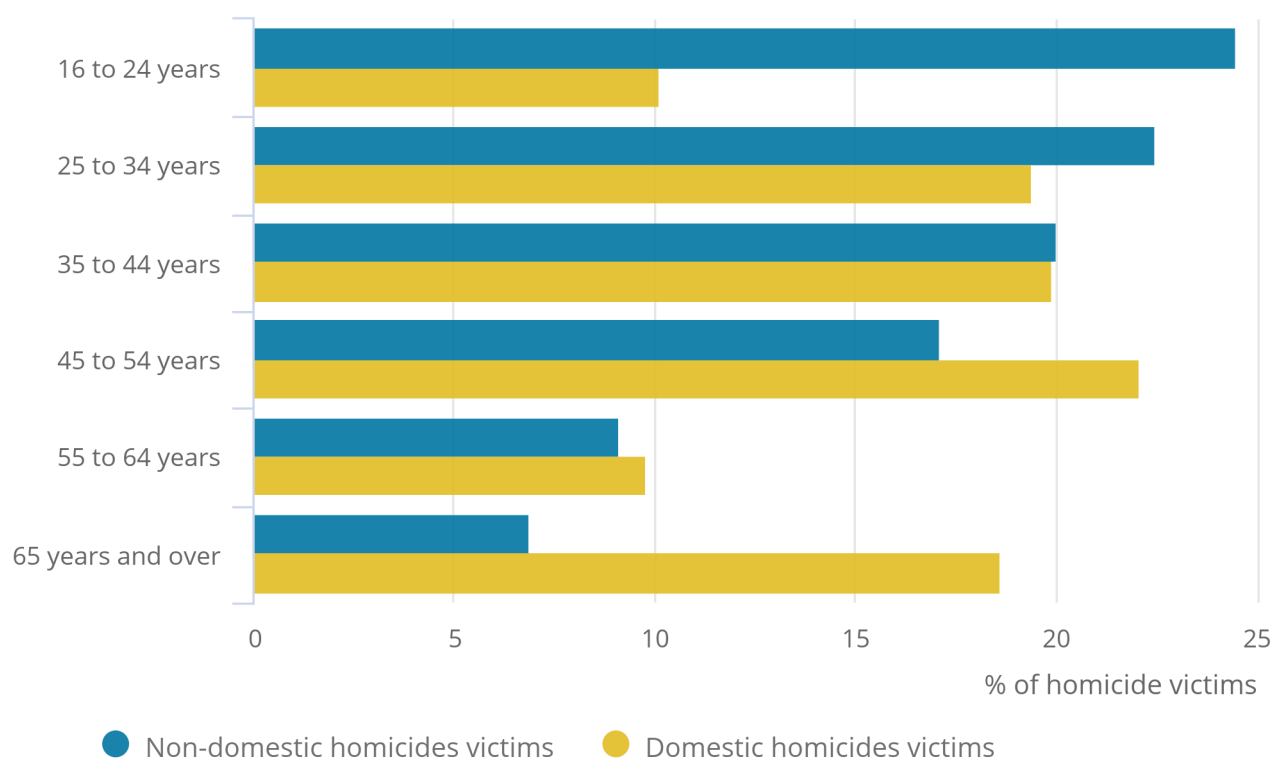
Figure 14 shows that the majority of domestic homicide victims fell in the 45 to 54 year age category, whereas the majority of non-domestic homicide victims fell in the 16 to 24 year age category.

#### Figure 14: The majority of domestic homicide victims were aged 45 to 54 years

Percentage of homicide victims by homicide type and age, England and Wales, year ending March 2016 to March 2018

### Figure 14: The majority of domestic homicide victims were aged 45 to 54 years

Percentage of homicide victims by homicide type and age, England and Wales, year ending March 2016 to March 2018



Source: Home Office - Homicide Index

#### Notes:

1. As at 8 December 2018; figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available.
2. Excludes cases with no suspects.

## Relationship to suspect

Data from the Homicide Index between the year ending March 2016 and the year ending March 2018 shows that, of the 270 female domestic homicide victims, the suspect was a partner or ex-partner in 218 cases. Of the 96 male domestic homicide victims, the suspect was a partner or ex-partner in 43 cases.

Of the 218 female victims of domestic homicide whose suspect was a partner or ex-partner, 94 were married to or in a civil partnership with the suspect, 48 were a common-law spouse or cohabiting partner to the suspect, and 34 were a boyfriend or girlfriend to the suspect.

Of the 43 male victims of domestic homicide whose suspect was a partner or ex-partner, 17 were a common-law spouse or cohabiting partner to the suspect, 11 were a boyfriend or girlfriend to the suspect, and 10 were married to or in a civil partnership with the suspect.

A similar number of male and female victims' suspects was a family member<sup>2</sup> (53 compared with 52 respectively).

Table 2: Number of domestic homicide victims by sex of victim and relationship to suspect  
Combined data for year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2018<sup>1</sup>, England and Wales

	Victims of domestic homicides		
	Male	Female	All
All Suspects <sup>2,3</sup>	96	270	366
Partner/ ex-partner	43	218	261
Adulterous relationship	1	2	3
Boyfriend, girlfriend	11	34	45
Common-law spouse or cohabiting partner	17	48	65
Ex- spouse, ex-common-law spouse or ex-cohabiting partner	1	22	23
Ex-boyfriend, girlfriend	3	18	21
Spouse (incl. civil partner)	10	94	104
Parent	29	25	54
Son/daughter	1	2	3
Other family	23	25	48
Brother/sister	4	8	12
Other relative	19	17	36

Source: Home Office – Homicide Index

#### Notes

1. As at 8 December 2018; figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts or as further information becomes available. [Back to table](#)
2. Includes one homicide with no suspect details. A suspect in a homicide case is defined as either: a person who has been arrested in respect of an offence initially classified as homicide and charged with homicide, including those who were subsequently convicted or a person who is suspected by the police of having committed the offence but is known to have died or committed suicide prior to arrest or being charged. [Back to table](#)
3. Includes siblings, other relatives. [Back to table](#)

#### Notes for: Domestic homicide

1. A suspect in a homicide case is defined as either: a person who has been arrested in respect of an offence initially classified as homicide and charged with homicide, including those who were subsequently convicted or a person who is suspected by the police of having committed the offence but is known to have died or committed suicide prior to arrest or being charged.
2. Family members include parents, sons and / or daughters, siblings or other relatives.

## 13 . 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](#).

## 14 . Annex 1: Measuring domestic abuse

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

This publication uses findings from the self-completion section of the CSEW. For the self-completion section 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 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 2015<sup>1</sup>.

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 homicides<sup>2</sup> are “domestic”<sup>3</sup>. 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 dataset<sup>4</sup>.

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 analysis<sup>5</sup>. 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.