

Article

# Domestic abuse victim services, England and Wales: November 2021

Information on the use of services that are available to victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales.

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## Table of contents

1. [Other pages in this release](#)
2. [Main points](#)
3. [Domestic abuse victim services data](#)
4. [Glossary](#)
5. [Data sources and quality](#)
6. [Related links](#)

# 1 . Other pages in this release

- [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2021](#)
- [Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2021](#)
- [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2021](#)
- [Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system, England and Wales: November 2021](#)
- [Redevelopment of domestic abuse statistics: research update November 2021](#)

## 2 . Main points

This release follows our [initial analysis on the impacts of the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#) where domestic abuse victim services experienced an increase in demand. However, we cannot determine if this is directly attributed to an increase in the number of victims. Here we highlight findings from data provided by services for victims of domestic abuse.

- In the year ending March 2021, the National Domestic Abuse Helpline received 49,756 calls, a 22% increase from 40,859 in the previous year; this was generally driven by peaks in calls during periods of national lockdown (Table 9).
- On average, in the year ending March 2021, the ManKind Initiative experienced 23% more calls to their helpline per month and 61% more visitors to their website per month than the previous year (Table 5, Table 6).
- The number of refuge bedspaces has increased in recent years in England to 4,277 in 2021 but remains below the minimum number of bedspaces recommended by the Council of Europe; only London and the West Midlands exceeded the minimum recommended bedspaces (Table 38).
- High demand for support services in the year ending March 2020 led to 63% of referrals of women to refuge services in England and 34% of women in Wales being declined; the main reason in England being because of a lack of capacity to support survivors and in Wales because the refuge was unable to meet survivor support needs (Table 26, Table 27, Table 34).
- The number of cases discussed at [multi-agency risk assessment conferences \(MARACs\)](#) in England and Wales increased by 8% to 107,855 in the year ending March 2021 compared with 99,966 in the year ending March 2020; this likely reflects an increase in reporting, not necessarily an increase in victims of domestic abuse (Table 20).

## 3 . Domestic abuse victim services data

### [Domestic abuse victim services](#)

Dataset | Released 24 November 2021

Data from different organisations on the availability of domestic abuse services and the characteristics of service users.

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

Dataset | Released 24 November 2021

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

## 4 . Glossary

### Domestic abuse

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

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

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

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

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

## Helpline

A helpline is a telephone service that offers information, advice or support to callers about particular issues. A domestic abuse helpline offers these services to victims of domestic abuse and their families, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf. Local, community-based helplines are distinct from the 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline. Many survivors may speak to both services, as the national helpline provides referrals to services in their local area, alongside refuge referrals, emotional support, risk assessment and safety planning, and information on rights and options.

## Multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs)

A multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) is a meeting where information is shared on the highest-risk domestic abuse cases between representatives from a range of agencies. After sharing all relevant information about the circumstances for a particular victim, the representatives discuss options for increasing the victim's safety and turn these into a coordinated action plan.

## Refuge service

A domestic abuse refuge service provides emergency temporary accommodation for victims of domestic abuse with a planned programme of therapeutic and practical support.

# 5 . Data sources and quality

This publication is part of our domestic abuse statistics release. It presents information on services that are available to victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales. Other commentary discussing domestic abuse in England and Wales can be found in the [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview](#).

## Data sources

To provide insight into how domestic abuse services respond to victims of domestic abuse, we have sourced data from a range of organisations. These data are sourced from non-governmental, administrative datasets and are not classified as official statistics.

The following services are included in this publication:

[ManKind Initiative](#)  
[The National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run by Refuge](#)  
[SafeLives](#)  
[Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#)  
[Welsh Women's Aid](#)  
[Women's Aid Federation of England](#)

For more information about the data sources available from the victim services see Section 7 of our [Domestic abuse victim services, England and Wales: November 2020](#) publication and Section 6 of our [Domestic abuse QMI](#).

## Quality

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Domestic abuse quality and methodology information \(QMI\)](#).

## 6 . Related links

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

Article | Released 24 November 2021

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

[Domestic abuse during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic, England and Wales: November 2020](#)

Article | Released 25 November 2020

Indicators from a range of data sources to assess the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on domestic abuse in England and Wales.