

Article

Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2024

Prevalence, long-term trends and types of domestic abuse experienced by people aged 16 years and over, based on findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, and police recorded crime.

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1 . Other pages in this release

- [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2024](#)
- [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2024](#)
- [Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system, England and Wales: November 2024](#)

2 . Main points

- The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending (YE) March 2024 estimated that 4.8% of people aged 16 years and over (2.3 million) experienced domestic abuse in the last year.
- There was no statistically significant difference in the prevalence of domestic abuse experienced in the last year by people aged 16 years and over compared with YE March 2023.
- The police recorded 1,350,428 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes in England and Wales in YE March 2024; 851,062 of these were recorded as domestic abuse-related crimes.
- The number of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police decreased by 6.6% compared with YE March 2023; this is, in part, a reflection of recent changes in police recording practices.

Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data presented in this release for year ending (YE) March 2024 are based on a split sample because new domestic abuse questions are being tested on the survey from April 2023. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced sample sizes on the quality of the estimates. For more information, see our [Domestic abuse QMI](#).

Police recorded crime data do not provide a measure of domestic abuse prevalence. Caution should be taken when comparing domestic abuse-related police recorded crime data with previous years because of changes in police recording practices. For more information see our [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system article](#).

3 . Understanding domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is often a hidden crime that is not reported to the police. Therefore, data held by the police can only provide a partial picture of the actual level of domestic abuse experienced. Many cases will not enter the criminal justice process, as they are not reported to the police. One of the strengths of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is that it covers many crimes that are not reported to the police and provides reliable estimates of domestic abuse.

On 4 October 2021, face-to face interviewing for the CSEW resumed, after it was suspended on 17 March 2020 because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The CSEW estimates for the year ending (YE) March 2022 are based on six months of interviews and are not [accredited official statistics](#) (formerly National Statistics).

The Home Office collects data on the number of domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes recorded by the police. Police recorded crime data, in isolation, do not provide a measure of prevalence that can be used to understand the true extent of domestic abuse. Caution should be taken when comparing the domestic abuse-related police recorded crime data used in this release, with data from previous years because of changes in police recording practices.

4 . Crime Survey for England and Wales

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates for year ending (YE) March 2024 are based on a split sample because new domestic abuse questions are being tested on the survey from April 2023. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced sample sizes on the quality of the estimates. For more information, see our [Domestic abuse QMI](#).

Domestic abuse in the last year

The CSEW estimated that 2.3 million people aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in YE March 2024. This is equal to a prevalence rate of 4.8%.

Information on the prevalence of domestic abuse by demographic variables such as sex and ethnicity can be found in our [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, year ending March 2024 article](#).

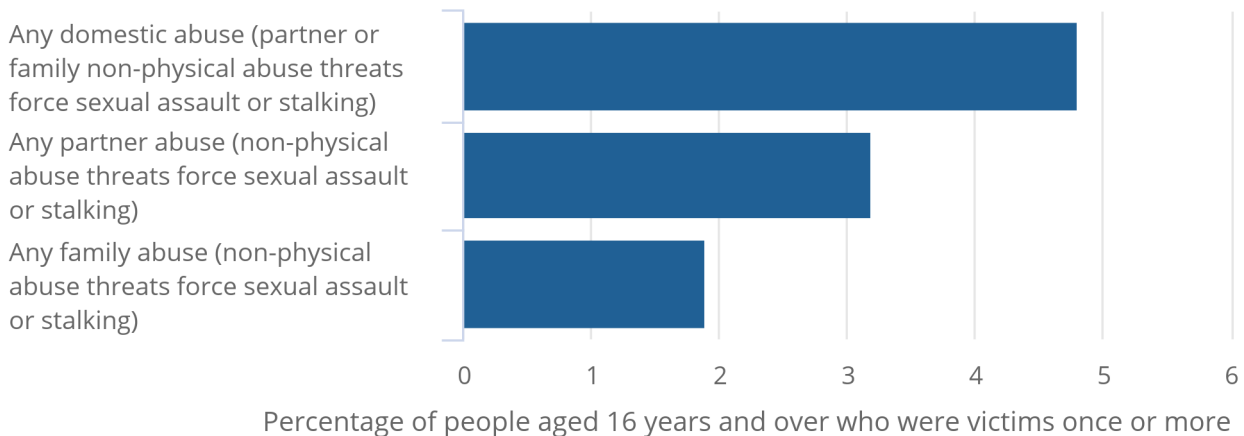
A higher percentage of people aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse by a partner or ex-partner (3.2%) compared with a family member (1.9%) in the last year (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Approximately 1 in 20 people experienced domestic abuse in YE March 2024

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year, for people aged 16 years and over, by perpetrator-relationship, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2024

Figure 1: Approximately 1 in 20 people experienced domestic abuse in YE March 2024

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year, for people aged 16 years and over, by perpetrator-relationship, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2024



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

Notes:

1. Data for YE March 2024 are based on a split sample. Caution should be taken because of the impact of the reduced sample size on the quality of the data.
2. Partner abuse refers to abuse carried out by a partner or ex-partner.
3. Some victims may have experienced both partner and family abuse in the last year.

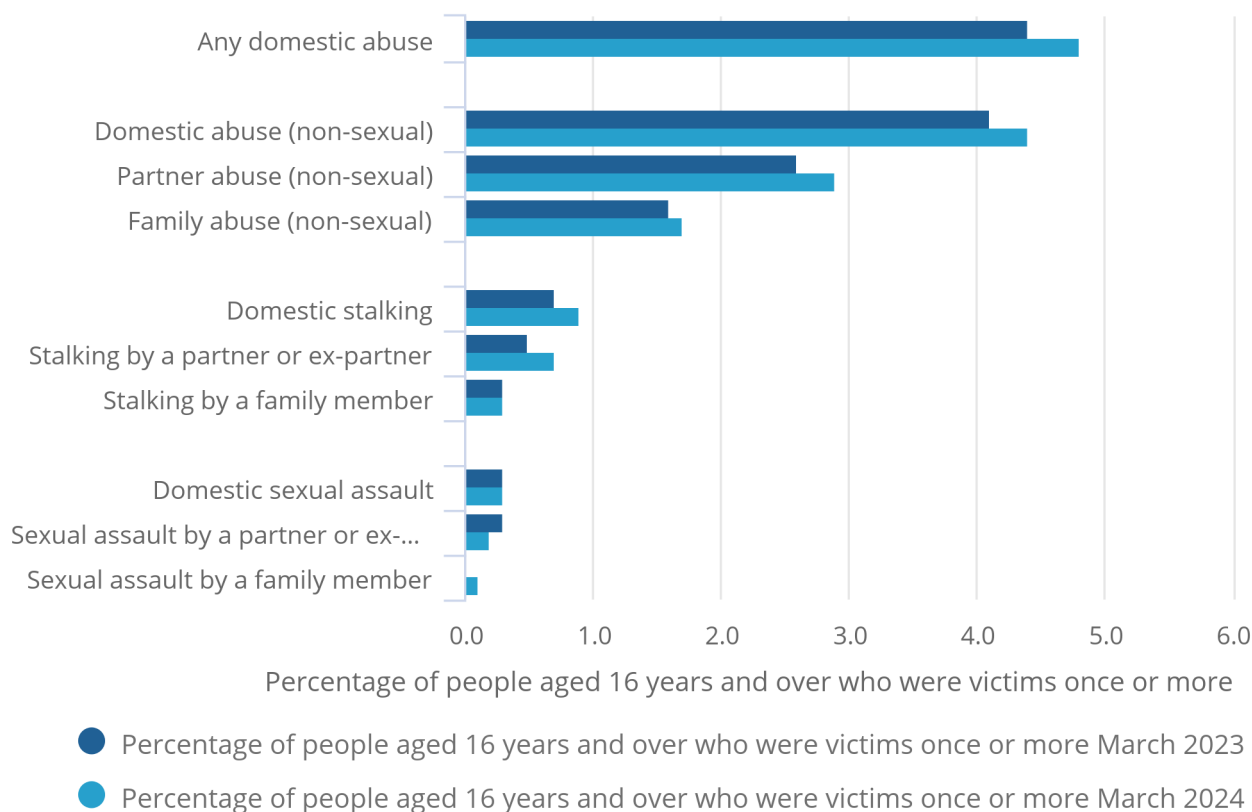
In YE March 2024, non-sexual domestic abuse was experienced by 4.4% of people aged 16 years and over (Figure 2). Domestic stalking was experienced by 0.9% of people and domestic sexual assault was experienced by 0.3% of people in the last year. There were no statistically significant differences for any of the overarching abuse types compared with the previous year.

Figure 2: There were no statistically significant differences across overarching domestic abuse types compared with YE March 2023

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2023 to YE March 2024

Figure 2: There were no statistically significant differences across overarching domestic abuse types compared with YE March 2023

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2023 to YE March 2024



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

Notes:

1. Data for YE March 2024 are based on a split sample. Caution should be taken because of the impact of the reduced sample size on the quality of the data.
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.

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

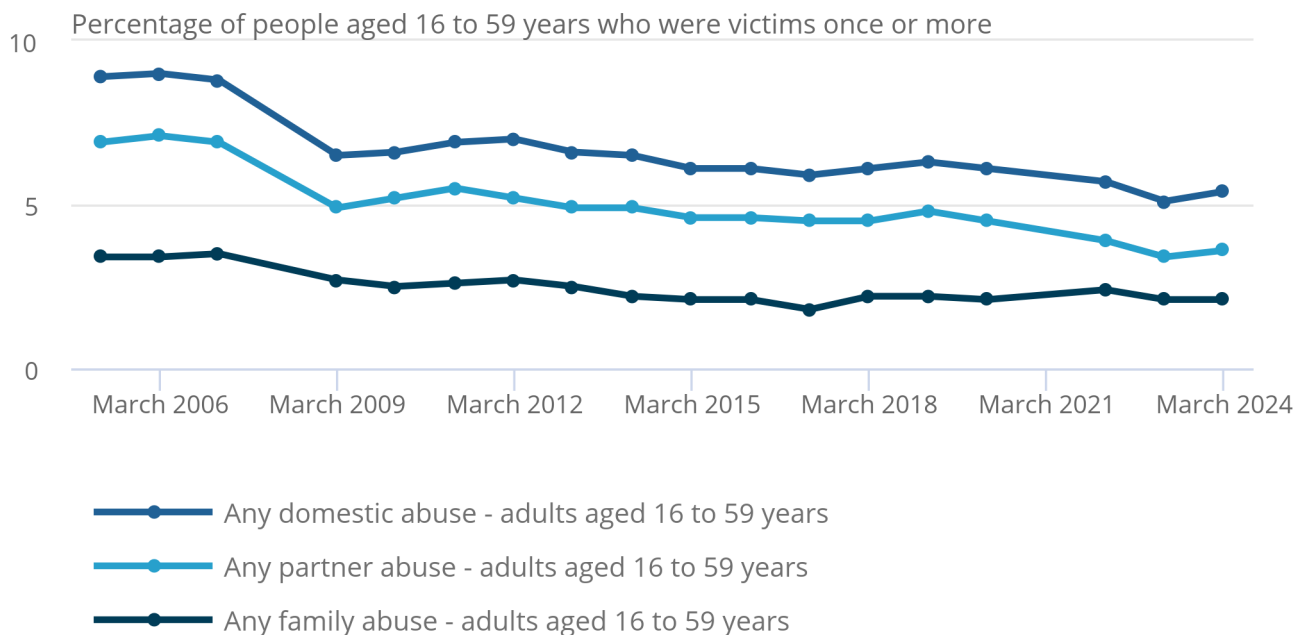
In YE March 2024, for people aged 16 to 59 years, the prevalence rate of domestic abuse was 5.4%. There was not a statistically significant difference compared with the figure from YE March 2023 (5.1%). However, there has been a gradual decrease in domestic abuse over the last 10 years, from 6.5% in YE March 2014.

Figure 3: There has been a gradual decrease in domestic abuse over the last 10 years

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year among people aged 16 to 59 years, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2005 to YE March 2024

Figure 3: There has been a gradual decrease in domestic abuse over the last 10 years

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year among people aged 16 to 59 years, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2005 to YE March 2024



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

Notes:

1. Data for YE March 2024 are based on a split sample. Caution should be taken because of the impact of the reduced sample sizes on the quality of the data.
2. Data for YE March 2023 are based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey, which resulted in missing data. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates.
3. Crime Survey estimates for YE March 2022 are not designated as accredited official statistics. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the potential effects of lower response rates on data quality.
4. Data are not available for YE March 2021 because the CSEW was suspended because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
5. Data are not available for YE March 2008 because comparable questions on any domestic abuse, any partner abuse and any family abuse were not included in that year.
6. The fall in prevalence between YE March 2007 and YE March 2009, which is seen across multiple abuse types, should not be interpreted as a real decrease and likely reflects changes in the survey.
7. Partner abuse refers to abuse carried out by a partner or ex-partner

Domestic abuse since the age of 16 years

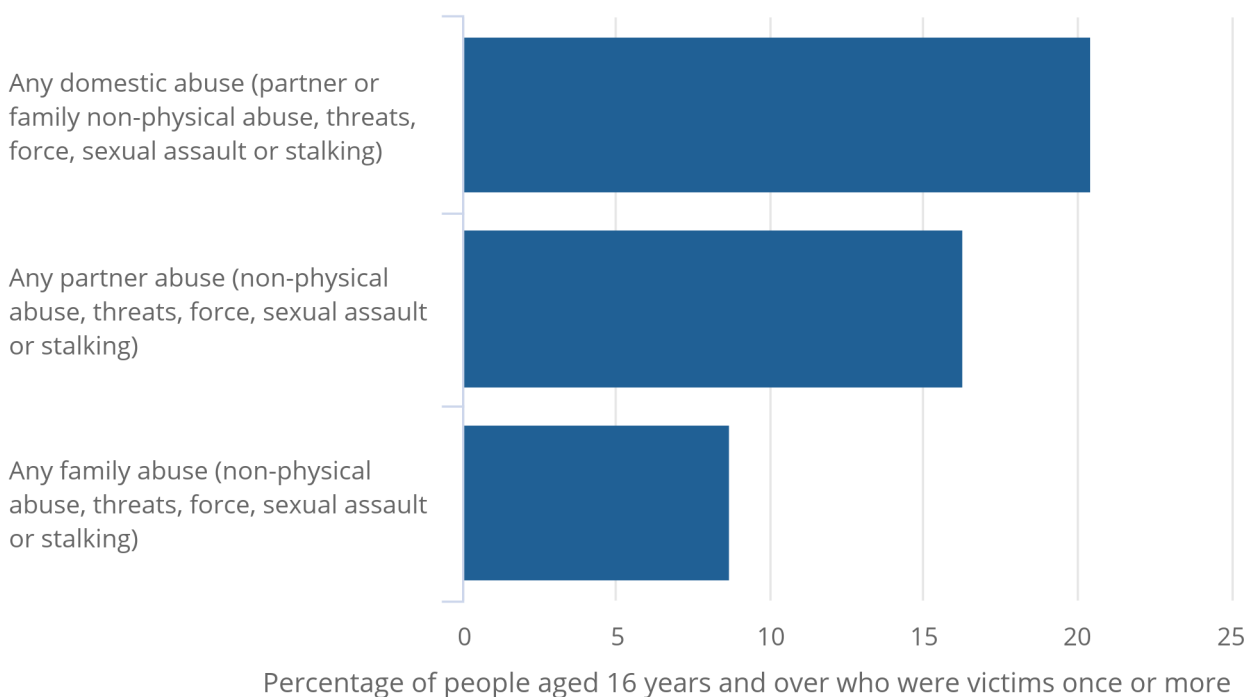
The CSEW for YE March 2024 showed that an estimated 9.9 million people aged 16 years and over had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 years. This equates to a prevalence rate of approximately one in five people aged 16 years and over (20.5%, Figure 4).

Figure 4: Approximately one in five people had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 years

Prevalence of domestic abuse since the age of 16 years for people aged 16 years and over, by perpetrator-relationship, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2024

Figure 4: Approximately one in five people had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 years

Prevalence of domestic abuse since the age of 16 years for people aged 16 years and over, by perpetrator-relationship, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2024



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

Notes:

1. Data for YE March 2024 are based on a split sample. Caution should be taken because of the impact of the reduced sample size on the quality of the data.
2. Partner abuse refers to abuse carried out by a partner or ex-partner.
3. Some victims may have experienced both partner and family abuse since the age of 16 years.

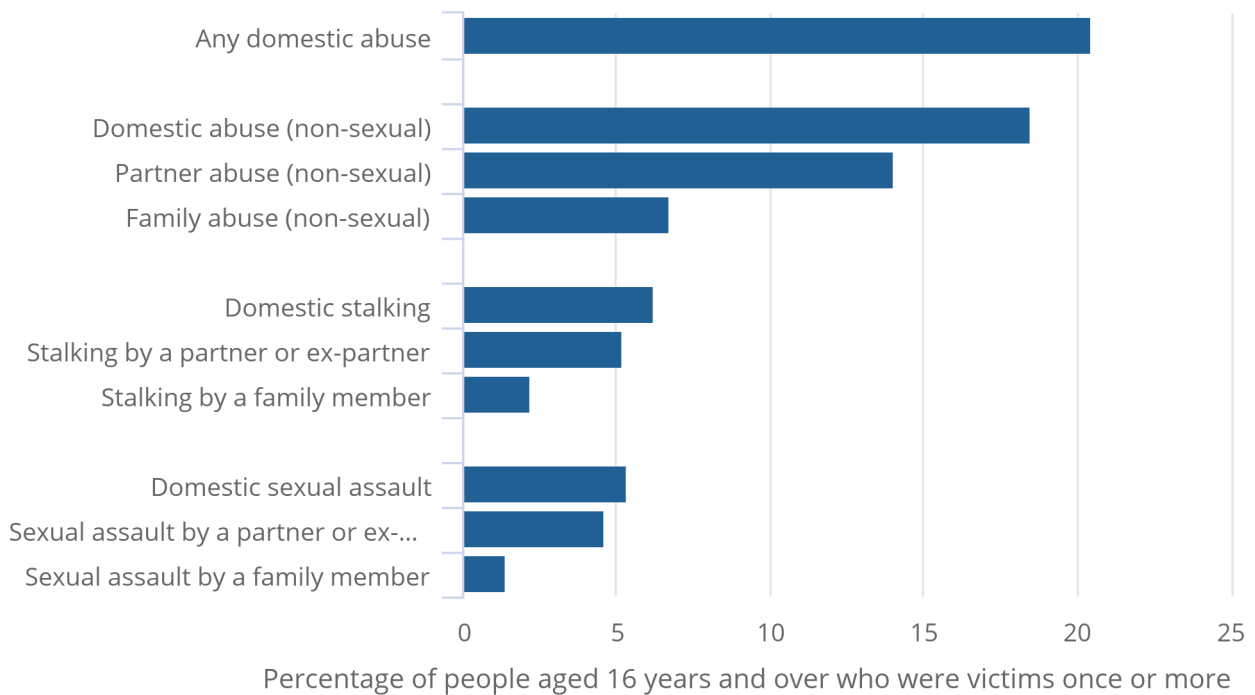
Non-sexual domestic abuse was experienced by 18.5% of people since the age of 16 years in YE March 2024 (Figure 5). Around 14.0% of victims experienced non-sexual domestic abuse by a partner or ex-partner and 6.7% experienced non-sexual domestic abuse by a family member since the age of 16 years.

Figure 5: Non-sexual domestic abuse was experienced by the highest percentage of people since the age of 16 years

Prevalence of domestic abuse since the age of 16 years for people aged 16 years and over, by type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2024

Figure 5: Non-sexual domestic abuse was experienced by the highest percentage of people since the age of 16 years

Prevalence of domestic abuse since the age of 16 years for people aged 16 years and over, by type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2024



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

Notes:

1. Data for YE March 2024 are based on a split sample. Caution should be taken because of the impact of the reduced sample size on the quality of the data.
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.

5 . Police recorded crime

The police recorded 1,350,428 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes [note 1] in England and Wales in the year ending (YE) March 2024. This was a 3.1% decrease from the previous year (from 1,394,020) [note 2]. This is likely, in part, to reflect recent changes in police recording practices.

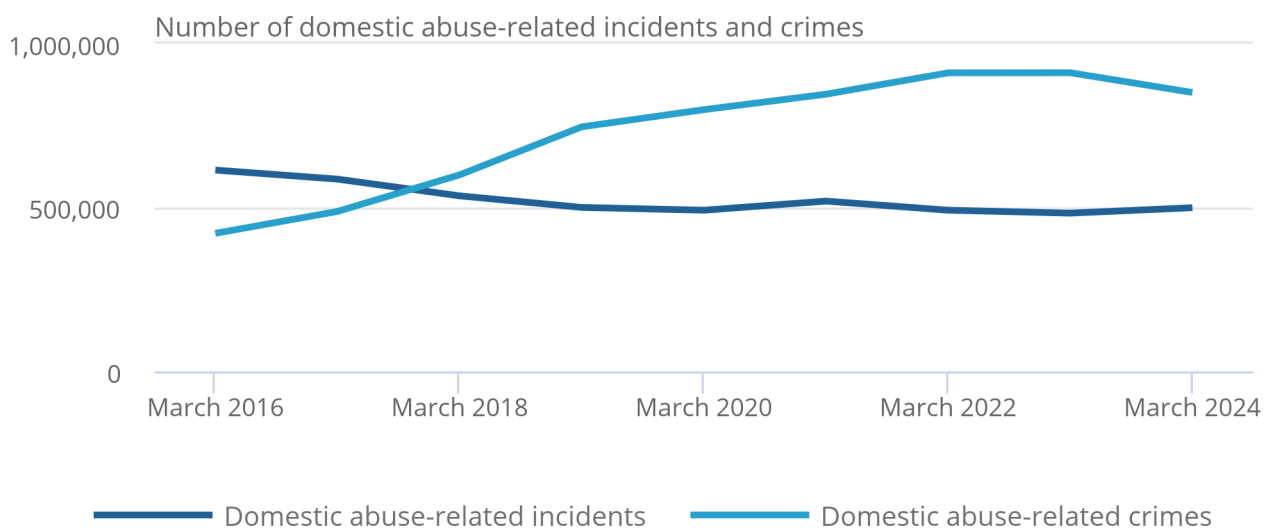
In YE March 2024, the number of domestic abuse-related incidents [note 3] increased to 499,366, compared with 482,772 in YE March 2023. Domestic abuse-related crimes decreased in YE March 2024 compared with the previous year, (851,062 compared with 911,248). This was the first year-on-year decrease since records began in 2015. Increases seen in previous years may have been, in part, caused by increased willingness and confidence of victims to report domestic abuse-related crimes, alongside improvements in police recording of crime.

Figure 6: Domestic abuse-related incidents increased while domestic abuse-related crimes decreased compared with the previous year

Number of domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes recorded by the police, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2016 to YE March 2024

Figure 6: Domestic abuse-related incidents increased while domestic abuse-related crimes decreased compared with the previous year

Number of domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes recorded by the police, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2016 to YE March 2024



Source: Police recorded crime from the Home Office data hub

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as accredited official statistics.
2. Domestic abuse-related incidents cover reports where, after initial investigation, the police have concluded that no notifiable crime was committed.

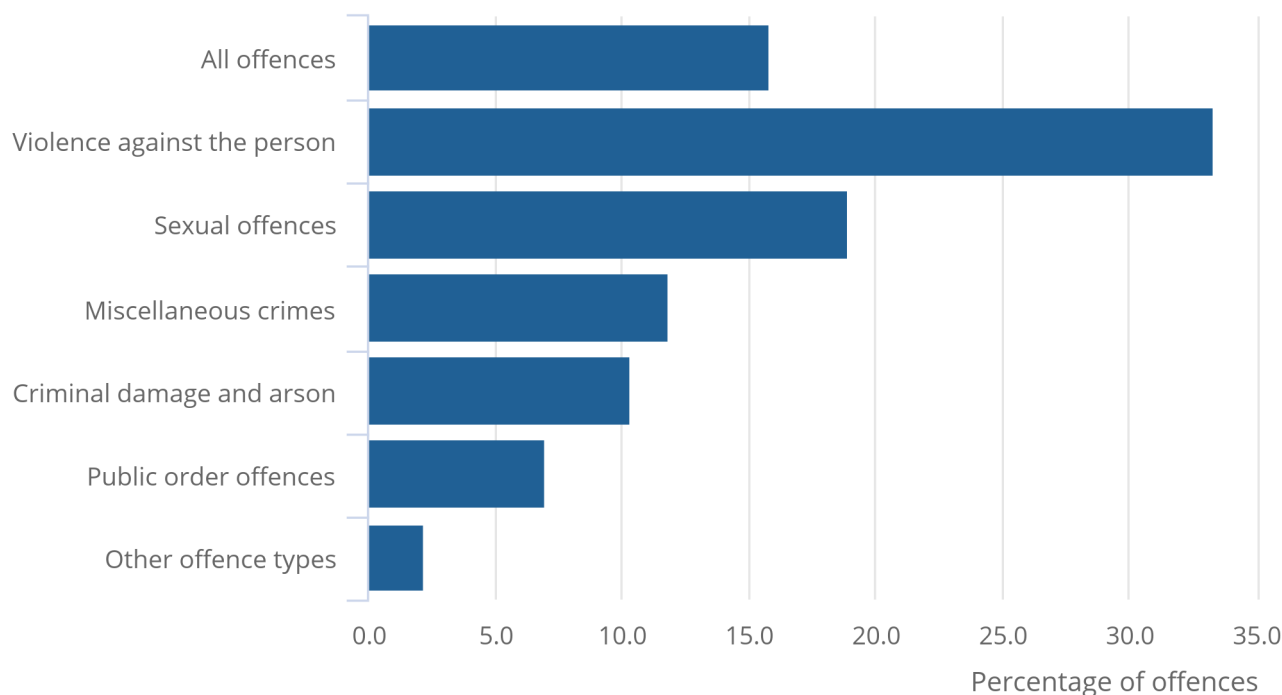
In YE March 2024, domestic abuse-related crimes represented 15.8% of all offences recorded by the police. Violence against the person had the highest proportion of offences identified as domestic abuse-related (33.3%) in YE March 2024 (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Violence against the person had the highest proportion of offences identified as domestic abuse-related

Percentage of offences recorded by the police that were identified as domestic abuse-related, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2024

Figure 7: Violence against the person had the highest proportion of offences identified as domestic abuse-related

Percentage of offences recorded by the police that were identified as domestic abuse-related, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2024



Source: Police recorded crime from the Home Office data hub

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as accredited official statistics.

The police recorded 203,138 domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences in YE March 2024, accounting for almost a quarter of all domestic abuse-related crimes. The majority of domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences fell within the stalking subgroup category (54.2%), followed by the harassment subgroup category (25.0%). This is shown in Figure 8.

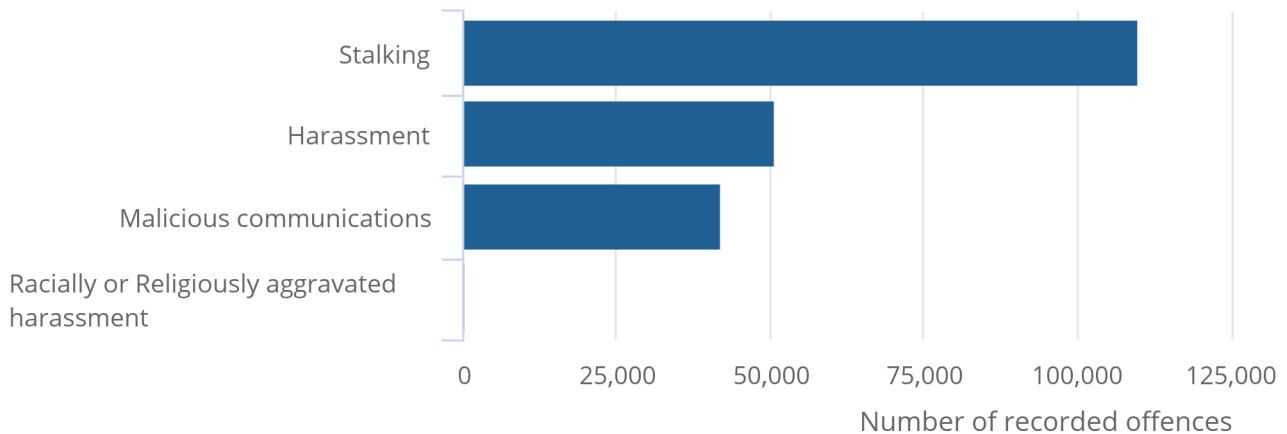
In May 2023, changes were made to the [Home Office Counting Rules](#) for conduct crimes (stalking, harassment, and coercive and controlling behaviour). The requirement to record two crimes, reported at the same time by a victim involving the same perpetrator, when one of them was a conduct crime, was removed. However, the police continue to investigate all offences. This has led to a reduction in offences often associated with conduct crimes, such as malicious communications, and an increase in offences such as stalking and harassment. The impact of these changes on statistics is difficult to measure, as compliance in crime recording in this area has been inconsistent across policing. Therefore, caution should be taken when comparing domestic abuse-related police recorded data with previous years.

Figure 8: Stalking and harassment were the sub-group categories with the highest number of domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences

Number of domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences recorded by the police, by offence, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2024

Figure 8: Stalking and harassment were the sub-group categories with the highest number of domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences

Number of domestic abuse-related stalking and harassment offences recorded by the police, by offence, England and Wales, year ending (YE) March 2024



Source: Police recorded crime from the Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as accredited official 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 45,310 offences of coercive control recorded by the police in England and Wales in YE March 2024. The rise seen in coercive control offences over recent years may be attributed to improvements made by the police in recognising incidents of coercive control and using the new law accordingly. More information on the Serious Crime Act 2015 can be found on the [Legislation.gov.uk website](https://legislation.gov.uk).

Domestic homicide

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

There were 353 domestic homicides recorded by the police in the three-year period between YE March 2021 and YE March 2023. This represents approximately one in five of all homicides where the victim was aged 16 years and over, during this period.

More information on the characteristics of victims of domestic homicide can be found in our [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, year ending March 2024 article](#).

Notes for: Police recorded crime

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 gives a better 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 that does not amount to a crime would be two family members having a loud argument, a third party calls the police, the police attend and calm the situation down, but no notifiable crime has taken place.

6 . Data on domestic abuse in England and Wales

[Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics](#)

Dataset | Released 27 November 2024

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

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

Dataset | Released 27 November 2024

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.

7 . Glossary

Controlling or coercive behaviour

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. Coercive behaviour is a continuing 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.

Domestic abuse

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

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

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

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

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children 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.

Domestic abuse-related crimes

Incidents of domestic abuse that resulted in a crime being recorded by the police and are included in police recorded crime.

Domestic abuse-related incidents

Incidents of domestic abuse that were reported to the police, but following investigation, do not amount to a crime or offence according to the National Crime Recording Standards. These can be added to domestic abuse-related crimes to create a total picture of the demand that domestic abuse puts on the police.

Domestic homicide

An offence of murder or manslaughter where the relationship between a victim aged 16 years and over and the perpetrator falls into one of the following categories: spouse, common-law spouse, cohabiting partner, boyfriend or girlfriend, ex-spouse, ex-cohabiting partner or ex-boyfriend or girlfriend, adulterous relationship, son or daughter (including step and adopted relationships), parent (including step and adopted relationships), brother or sister, other relatives.

Stalking

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

8 . Data sources and quality

Further quality and methodology information can be found in our [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2024 bulletin](#).

Crime Survey for England and Wales

More information about the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) can be found in:

- our [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#)
- our [Domestic abuse QMI](#)
- our [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system: November 2024 article](#)

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

How the police measure domestic abuse

The Home Office collects data on the number of domestic abuse-related incidents and the number of domestic abuse-related crimes.

Police recorded crime data, in isolation, do not provide a measure of prevalence to understand the true extent of domestic abuse. Caution should be taken when comparing domestic abuse-related police recorded crime data with previous years because of changes in police recording practices. For example, in May 2023, changes were made to the [Home Office Counting Rules](#) for conduct crimes (stalking, harassment and coercive and controlling behaviour).

In addition, from April 2023, police forces began using a new methodology, the National Data Quality Improvement Service (NDQIS), to help identify whether an offence was domestic abuse-related or not. The NDQIS tool automatically flags offences involving domestic abuse-related offences rather than relying on a manually-added marker. At the time of publishing, 36 forces have used NDQIS and further forces will be moving to the new methodology in future releases.

More information on domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes can be found in our [Domestic abuse QMI](#) and our [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system: November 2024 article](#).

Home Office Homicide Index

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

Analysis on data from the Homicide Index within this publication combines data for a three-year period (year ending (YE) March 2021 to YE March 2023) to account for the year-to-year variability in the volume of homicides. More information can be found in our [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system: November 2024 article](#).

9 . Related links

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

Methodology | Released 27 November 2024

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

[How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system: November 2024](#)

Article | Released 27 November 2024

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

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

Dataset | Released 26 September 2024

Stalking experienced by women and men, including numbers, type and personal characteristics, based upon annual findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales.

[Redevelopment of domestic abuse statistics: research update November 2023](#)

Article | Released 24 November 2023

Update on the ongoing research to redevelop statistics on domestic abuse from the Crime Survey for England and Wales.

[Partner abuse in detail, England and Wales: year ending March 2023](#)

Article | Released 24 November 2023

The amount, type and nature of partner abuse experienced in the last year; information from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

[Domestic abuse victim services, England and Wales: 2023](#)

Article | Released 24 November 2023

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

[Statistics on so called 'honour-based' abuse offences, England and Wales, 2023 to 2024](#)

Article | Released 7 November 2024

Home Office release containing statistics about so called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA)-related offences and incidents recorded by the police in England and Wales.

10 . Cite this article

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 27 November 2024, ONS website, article, [Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2024](#).