Article

Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2026

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 . Overview

The statistics in this release are taken from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime. They refer to people aged 16 years and over, for the year ending (YE) March 2026, unless otherwise stated.

Our Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview article summarises our statistics on domestic abuse, while our Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales article presents headline prevalence measures.

Figure 1: A higher percentage of females than males were victims of domestic abuse in the last year

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by sex and type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending March 2026

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Crime Survey for England and Wales

According to the CSEW, 11.5% of females aged 16 years and over and 7.6% of males experienced domestic abuse in the last year. This is equivalent to 2.8 million females and 1.8 million males.

There was a statistically significant increase in domestic abuse prevalence in the last year for both females and males in YE March 2026, compared with YE March 2025. Prevalence increased from 9.1% to 11.5% for females and from 6.5% to 7.6% for males.

Our best assessment is that this increase includes real change. However, changes to the questionnaire and its implementation may have affected the scale of the increase. In addition, as a single year's data point, it is too early to say whether this increase will come to represent a new, higher level of prevalence.

A significantly higher proportion of people aged 20 to 24 years were victims of domestic abuse in the last year, compared with those aged 25 years and over.

Information on the terminology used in this release is available in Section 12: Definitions.

Police recorded crime

The police recorded that the victim was female in 71.6% of domestic abuse-related crimes, in YE March 2026.

Police recorded crime data do not provide a measure of domestic abuse prevalence. Changes in police recording practices have affected the comparability of domestic abuse-related police recorded crime data over time.

71.6% of victims of domestic homicide were female, compared with 10.7% of victims of non-domestic homicide between YE March 2023 and YE March 2025.

Statistical significance

In this release, "significant" means "statistically significant" unless otherwise stated.

2 . How to use these statistics

These statistics use data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime.

With these statistics, you can:

- view estimates of the prevalence of domestic abuse from the CSEW by victim characteristics
- find domestic abuse-related police recorded crime data for England and Wales by victim characteristics
- examine domestic homicide data from the Home Office Homicide Index by victim characteristics

With these statistics, you cannot:

- compare estimates derived from the new CSEW survey questions (used from year ending March 2024 onwards) with those derived from the previous survey questions
- examine police recorded crime data in isolation as a measure of domestic abuse prevalence, as domestic abuse is often not reported to the police

3 . Sex

Crime Survey for England and Wales

The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that 11.5% of females and 7.6% of males aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the last year. This is equivalent to 2.8 million females and 1.8 million males.

A significantly higher proportion of females were victims of domestic, partner and family abuse than males.

Split by the different types of abuse, prevalence rates for females were significantly higher, compared with males for all abuse types (Figure 2).

Figure 2: A higher percentage of females than males were victims of all domestic abuse types in the last year

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by sex and type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending March 2026

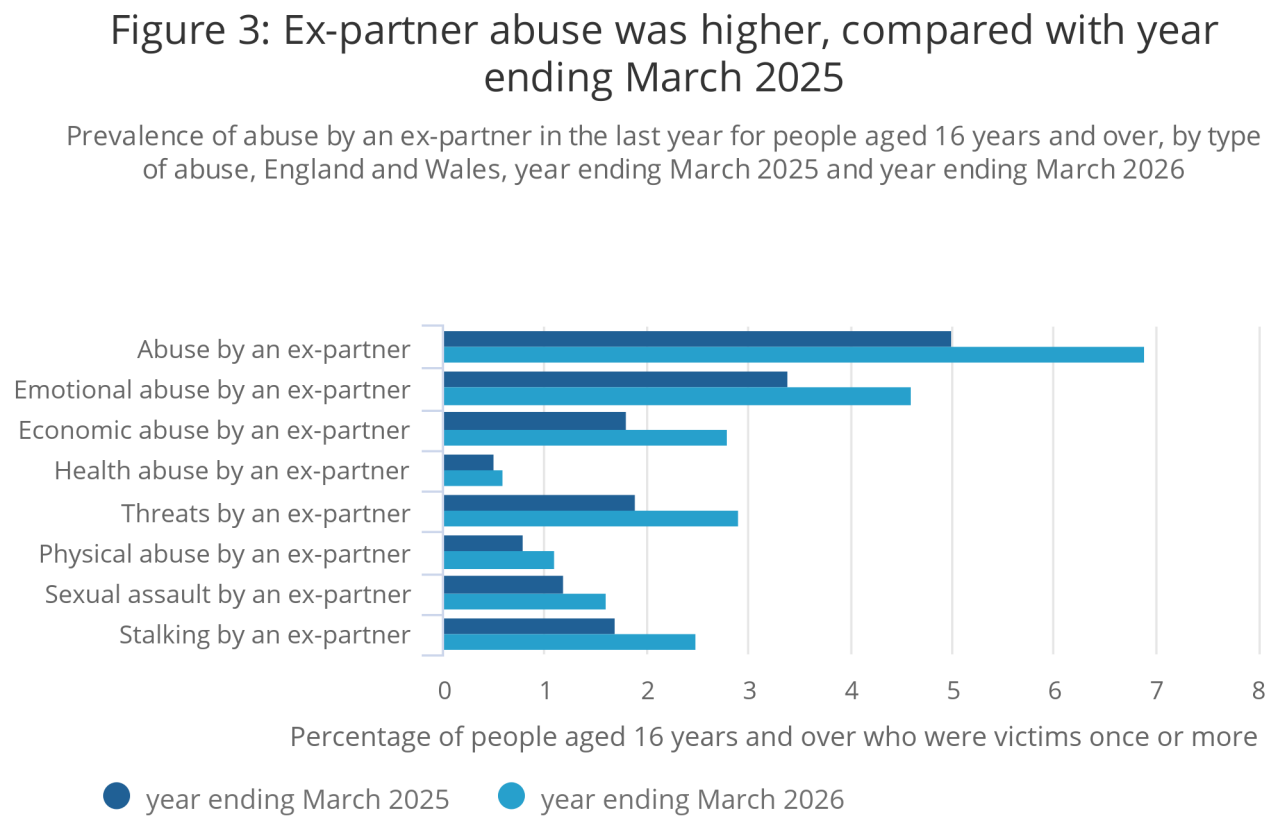
Domestic abuse prevalence in the last year was significantly higher in year ending (YE) March 2026 than in YE March 2025 for both females and males. Prevalence increased from 9.1% to 11.5% for females and from 6.5% to 7.6% for males.

Partner abuse increased significantly in the last year, from 7.3% to 9.5% for females and from 4.9% to 6.3% for males. There were no significant changes in family abuse in the last year for females and males.

The significant increase in partner abuse was attributable to a significant increase in abuse by an ex-partner, which increased from 6.2% to 8.6% for females and from 3.7% to 5.1% for males (Figure 3). For females, all types of abuse by an ex-partner increased significantly. For males, only emotional abuse increased significantly compared with YE March 2025.

Figure 3: Ex-partner abuse was higher, compared with year ending March 2025

Prevalence of abuse by an ex-partner in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending March 2025 and year ending March 2026



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

Police recorded crime

Data supplied from 34 police forces showed that the victim was:

- female in 71.6% of domestic abuse-related crimes
- male in 28.4% of domestic abuse-related crimes

This proportion was similar for most offence categories. However, for domestic abuse-related sexual offences, the proportion of female victims was 90.5%, compared with 9.5% for males (Figure 4). This pattern was similar to that seen in previous years.

Figure 4: There were more female than male victims of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police

Percentage of domestic abuse-related offences recorded by the police, by sex of the victim and selected offence group, England and Wales, year ending March 2026

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4 . Age

Crime Survey for England and Wales

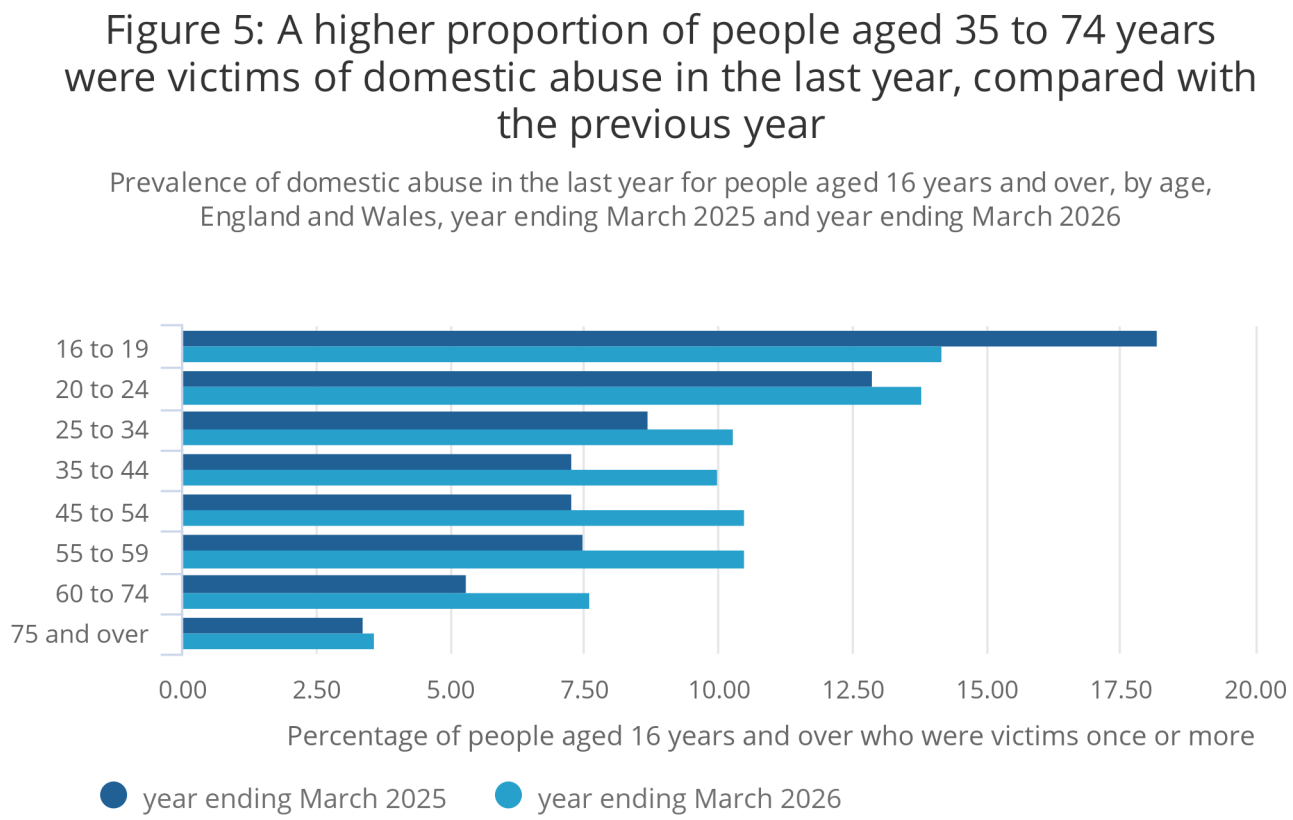
Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates showed that a significantly higher proportion of people aged 20 to 24 years (13.8%) were victims of domestic abuse, compared with those in age categories of 25 years and over (Figure 5).

In contrast, the proportion of people who were victims of domestic abuse, and who were aged 60 to 74 years (7.6%), or 75 years and over (3.6%), was significantly lower than people in age groups between 16 and 59 years.

While the broad pattern hasn't changed, compared with year ending March 2025, domestic abuse significantly increased for people in age groups between 35 and 74 years (Figure 5). For all other age groups, the differences were not significant.

Figure 5: A higher proportion of people aged 35 to 74 years were victims of domestic abuse in the last year, compared with the previous year

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by age, England and Wales, year ending March 2025 and year ending March 2026



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

The percentage of females who experienced domestic abuse in the last year was higher than the percentage of males for all age groups except for 16- to 19-year-olds, where there was no significant difference.

Police recorded crime

Data supplied from 33 police forces allow analysis for all police recorded violence against the person offences by sex. These data showed that for females in age groups between 20 and 44 years, over half of the offences (between 50.5% and 52.9%) were domestic abuse-related.

Among domestic abuse-related crimes, there was a higher proportion of violence against the person offences with male victims in older age groups than in younger age groups.

Figure 6: A higher proportion of violence against the person offences with female victims were identified as domestic abuse-related than those with male victims

Proportion of violence against the person offences recorded by the police that were identified as domestic abuse-related, England and Wales, by age and sex of victims, year ending March 2026

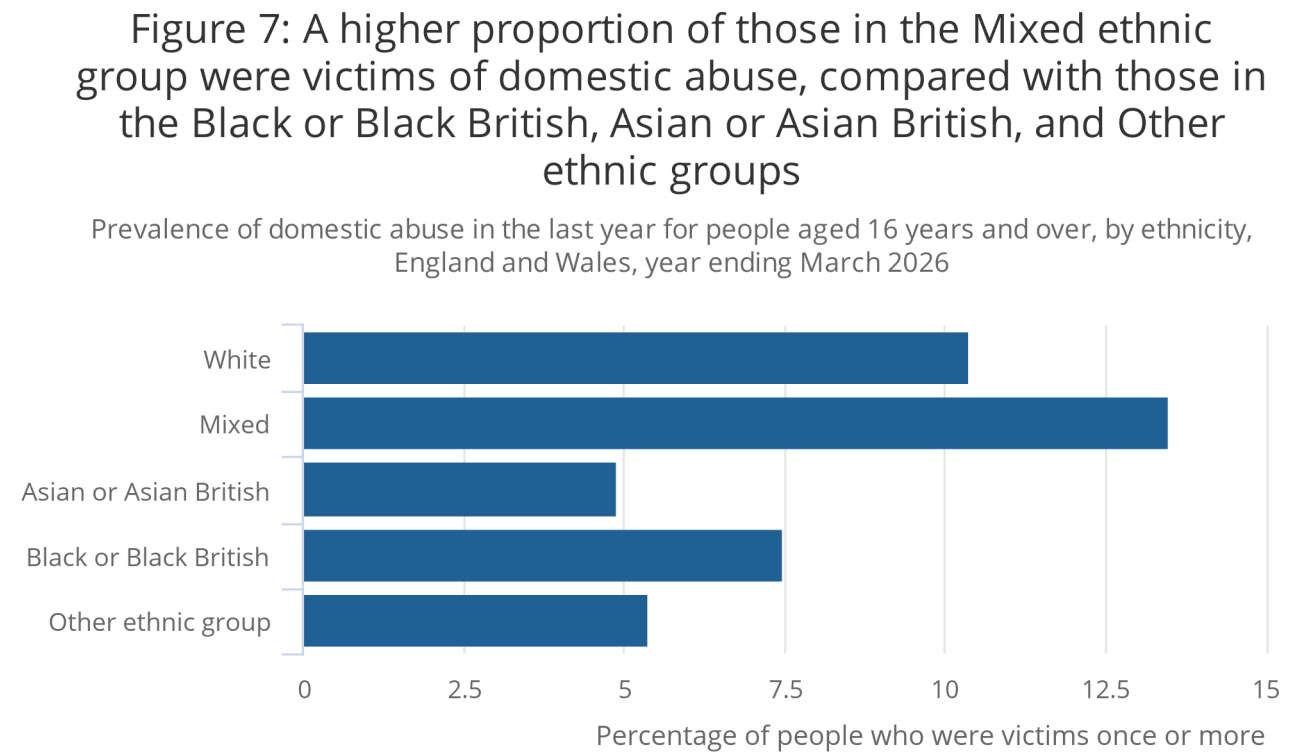
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5 . Ethnicity

Estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales for year ending March 2026 show that a significantly higher proportion of people in the Mixed (13.5%) and White ethnic groups (10.4%) experienced domestic abuse in the last year, compared with those in the Black or Black British (7.5%), Asian or Asian British (4.9%), and Other ethnic groups (5.4%, Figure 7). There was no significant difference in the prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year between the Mixed and White ethnic groups.

Figure 7: A higher proportion of those in the Mixed ethnic group were victims of domestic abuse, compared with those in the Black or Black British, Asian or Asian British, and Other ethnic groups

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by ethnicity, England and Wales, year ending March 2026



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

6 . Sex of perpetrator

The Crime Survey for England and Wales year ending March 2026 estimated that 4.5% of people aged 16 years and over experienced partner abuse by a male perpetrator in the last year, while 3.0% experienced partner abuse by a female perpetrator (Figure 8).

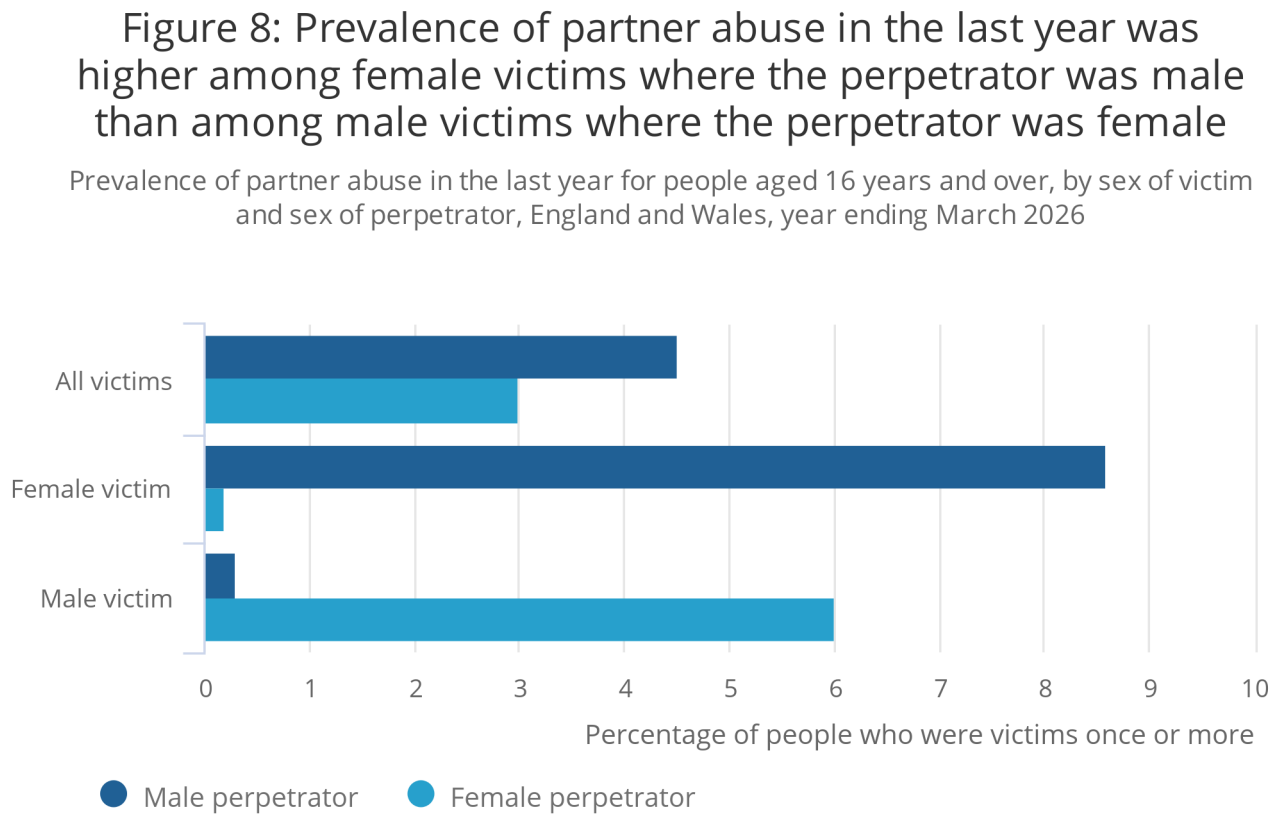
Split by sex of victim, the prevalence of partner abuse among females was higher where the perpetrator was male (8.6%) than where the perpetrator was female (0.2%).

The prevalence of partner abuse among males was higher where the perpetrator was female (6.0%) than where the perpetrator was male (0.3%).

Estimates exclude victims who have had both male and female partners, as it is not possible to determine whether the perpetrator was male or female, or whether multiple perpetrators were of both sexes.

Figure 8: Prevalence of partner abuse in the last year was higher among female victims where the perpetrator was male than among male victims where the perpetrator was female

Prevalence of partner abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by sex of victim and sex of perpetrator, England and Wales, year ending March 2026



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

7 . Marital status

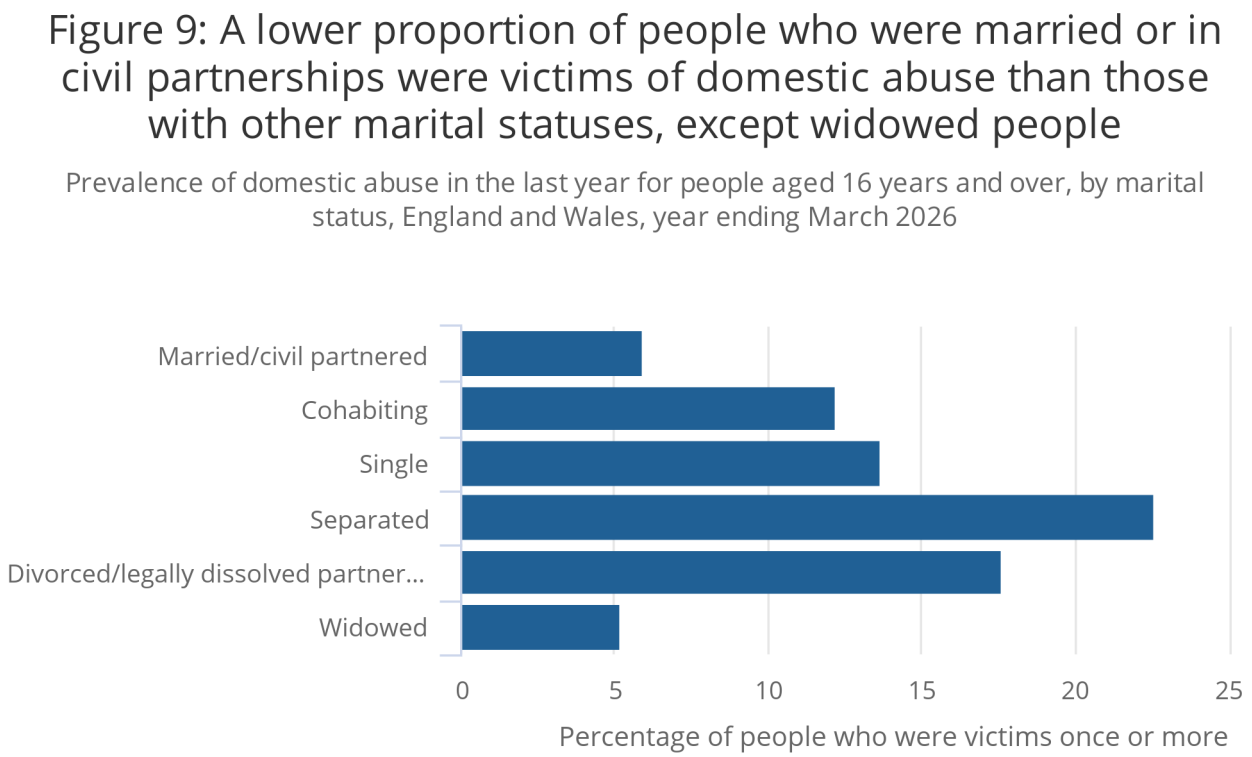
Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates showed that a significantly lower proportion of people who were married or in a civil partnership (5.9%, Figure 9) experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those who were either:

- cohabiting (12.2%)
- single (13.7%)
- separated (22.6%)
- divorced (17.6%)

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

Figure 9: A lower proportion of people who were married or in civil partnerships were victims of domestic abuse than those with other marital statuses, except widowed people

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by marital status, England and Wales, year ending March 2026



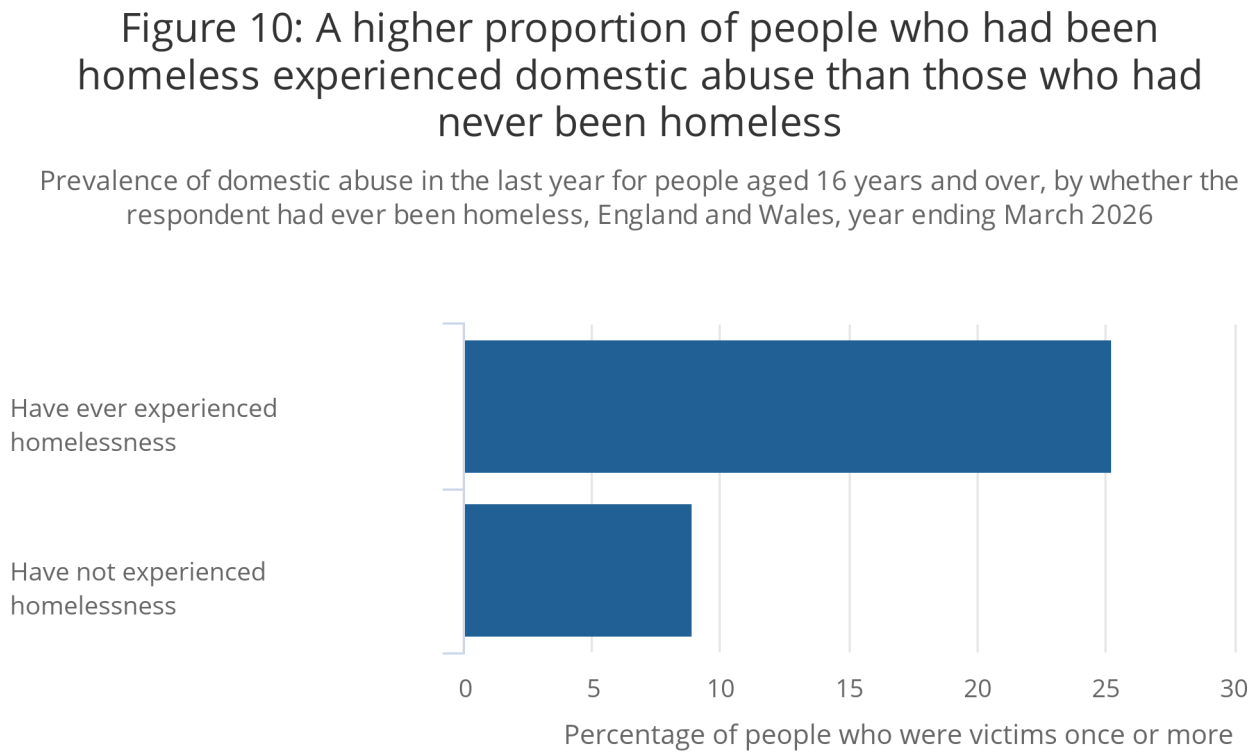
Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics

8 . Homelessness

A higher proportion of people who had experienced homelessness in their lifetime experienced domestic abuse in the last year (25.3%) than those who had never been homeless (8.9%), according to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (Figure 10). These data may include people who have become homeless as a result of the abuse experienced.

Figure 10: A higher proportion of people who had been homeless experienced domestic abuse than those who had never been homeless

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by whether the respondent had ever been homeless, England and Wales, year ending March 2026



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

9 . Household structure

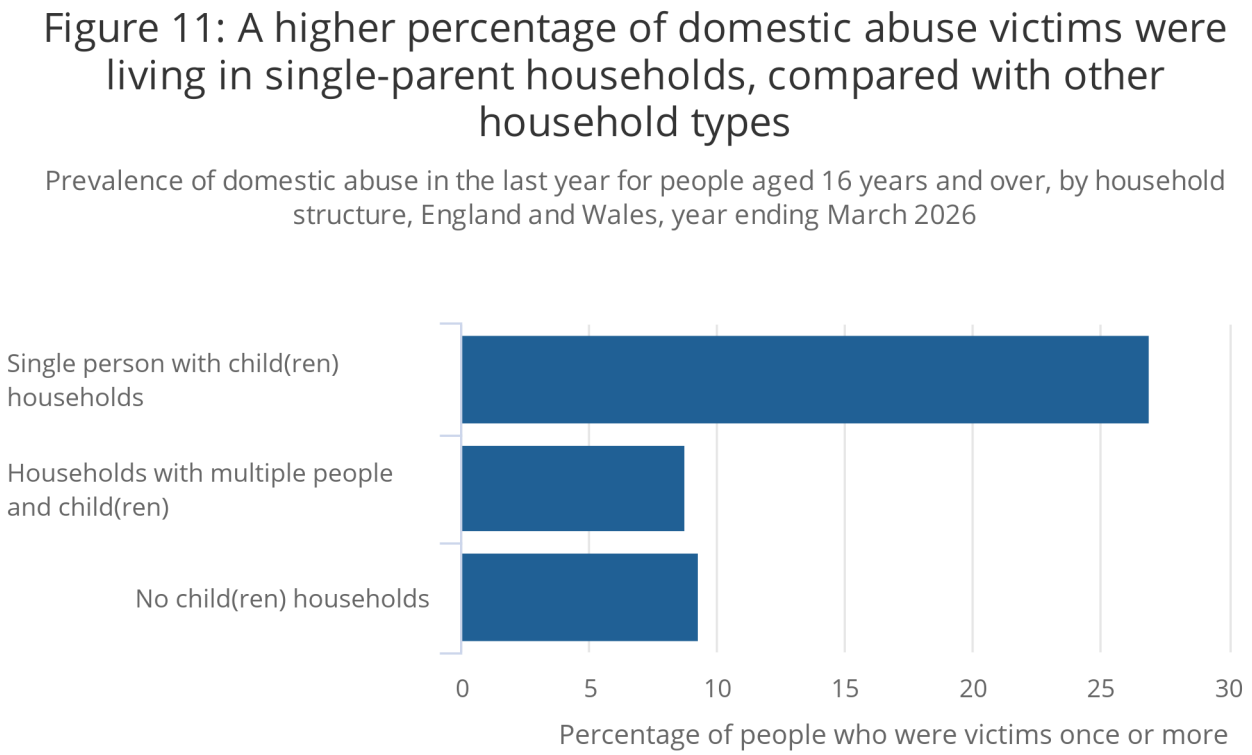
Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates showed that the proportion of domestic abuse experienced in the last year was higher in households composed of a single person with one or more children (26.9%, Figure 11), compared with:

- households with multiple people, and with one child or more (8.8%)
- households with no children (9.3%)

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

Figure 11: A higher percentage of domestic abuse victims were living in single-parent households, compared with other household types

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by household structure, England and Wales, year ending March 2026



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

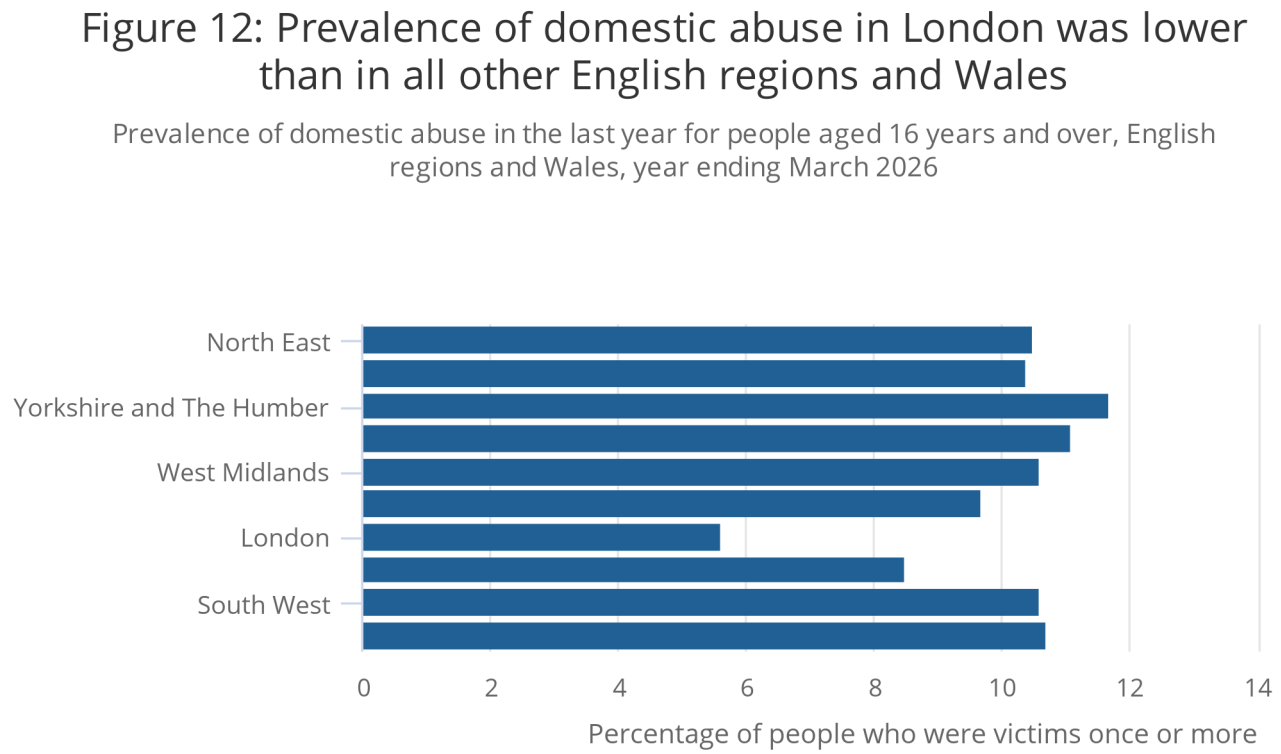
10 . Area

Area refers to the location of residence at the time of the survey and may differ from the location of residence at the time of the abuse or the location at which the abuse took place. Differences by area could be linked to other victim characteristics, such as age. Results in this section should therefore be interpreted with caution.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that domestic abuse prevalence was significantly lower in London (5.6%, Figure 12) than it was in all other English regions and Wales.

Figure 12: Prevalence of domestic abuse in London was lower than in all other English regions and Wales

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, English regions and Wales, year ending March 2026



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

Split by sex, prevalence estimates for the English regions and Wales followed the national trend. A higher percentage of females were victims of domestic abuse, compared with males. The differences were significant in all regions except the West Midlands.

The rate of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales was 13.3 per 1,000 population. By region:

- Yorkshire and The Humber had the highest rate (17.2 per 1,000 population)
- London had the lowest rate (10.4 per 1,000 population, Figure 13)

These figures could reflect actual differences in the rates of domestic abuse between regions which may be caused by differences in population characteristics. However, they could also reflect regional differences in the reporting of domestic abuse to the police, and how the police subsequently record those offences.

Figure 13: London had the lowest recorded rates of domestic abuse-related crimes

Rate of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police, English regions and Wales, year ending March 2026

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11 . Domestic homicide

Homicide Index data show that 71.6% of the victims of domestic homicide were female, for the three-year period year ending (YE) March 2023 to YE March 2025. The majority of victims of non-domestic homicide during the same period were male (89.3%).

According to Homicide Index data for the three-year period YE March 2023 to YE March 2025 (Table 1):

- the suspect was male in 94.6% of domestic homicide cases with female victims
- the suspect was female in 38.5% of domestic homicide cases with male victims
- the suspect was a male partner or ex-partner in 71.9% of domestic homicides with female victims
- the suspect was a male family member in 58.3% of domestic homicides with male victims

Table 1: Number of domestic homicide victims by type of relationship, and by sex of victim and suspect
Combined three-year data for year ending March 2023 to year ending March 2025, England and Wales

Suspect sex and relationship type	Female victims of domestic homicides	Male victims of domestic homicides
All females	13	37
Female partner or ex-partner	2	34
Female family member	11	3
All males	229	59
Male partner or ex-partner	174	3
Male family member	55	56

Source: Homicide Index data from the Home Office

12 . Definitions

Current partner

A current partner is someone with whom the respondent was in an intimate relationship at the time of completing the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

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 two people aged 16 years and over who are personally connected to each other. Two people can be considered personally connected to each other if they:

- are, or have been, married or in a civil partnership
- have agreed to marry or entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child
- are relatives

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, hear, or experience the effects of the abuse as a victim of domestic abuse, if the adult victim or perpetrator of the abuse is:

- a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child
- a relative

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 that, 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 comprehensive overview of the demand that domestic abuse puts on the police.

An example of a domestic abuse-related incident that does not amount to a crime would be two family members having a loud argument, then a third party calls the police, the police attend and calm the situation down, but no notifiable crime has taken place.

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

Homicide suspect

A suspect in a homicide case is defined as either of the following:

- 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
- 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

Ex-partner

An ex-partner is someone with whom the respondent was in an intimate relationship, but at the time of completing the CSEW is no longer in this relationship. Data collected from the CSEW on ex-partner abuse will include abuse by someone with whom the respondent was in an intimate relationship at the time of the abuse, as well as abuse from someone with whom they were no longer in an intimate relationship at the time of the abuse.

In the last year

In the last year refers to the time period covered by some questions on the CSEW. Specifically, respondents are asked whether they have experienced something in the last 12 months. This could include a single incident or a pattern of behaviour.

Since the age of 16 years

Since the age of 16 years refers to the time period covered by some questions on the CSEW. Specifically, respondents are asked whether they have experienced something since they were 16 years old. This could include a single incident or a pattern of behaviour, and allows for an understanding of whether something has happened during the respondent's adult life.

13 . Data on domestic abuse

Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics
Dataset | Released 25 November 2026
Domestic abuse numbers, prevalence, types and victim characteristics, based on findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and police recorded crime.

14 . Quality, methods and data sources

About the statistics

Domestic abuse QMI
Methodology | Released 25 November 2026
Quality and methodology information for domestic abuse, detailing the strengths and limitations of the data, methods used, and data uses and users.

About the data sources

How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system: November 2026
Methodology | Released 25 November 2026
Information on how data from each stage of the criminal justice system are captured from different sources.

Statistical designation

Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) statistics on domestic abuse are accredited official statistics and were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in October 2025. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

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

15 . Related links

Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2026
Bulletin | Released 25 November 2026
Figures on domestic abuse from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, police recorded crime and other organisations.

Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2026
Article | Released 25 November 2026
Prevalence, long-term trends and types of domestic abuse experienced by people aged 16 years and over.

16 . Cite this page

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