

Article

Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system, England and Wales: November 2022

Responses to and outcomes of domestic abuse-related cases in the criminal justice system.

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

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1 . Other pages in this release

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2 . Main points

- The police recorded 910,980 domestic abuse-related crimes in England and Wales in the year ending March 2022; a 7.7% increase compared with the previous year, continuing an increasing trend that may reflect increasing willingness of victims to report crimes.
- The police made 31.3 arrests per 100 domestic abuse-related crimes in the year ending March 2022; down from 32.6 in the year ending March 2021 (in the 41 police forces that supplied complete data in both years).
- The number of referrals of suspects of domestic abuse-flagged cases from the police to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for a charging decision in England and Wales fell from 77,812 in the year ending March 2021 to 67,063 in the year ending March 2022, mirroring the decrease in arrests.
- The CPS domestic abuse-related charging rate in England and Wales increased for the first time in four years to 72.7% in the year ending March 2022, but remains below the year ending March 2018 (75.9%).
- The average number of days to charge domestic abuse-related cases in England and Wales increased for the fourth year running to 23.8 in the year ending March 2022.
- The number of domestic abuse-related CPS prosecutions in England and Wales has decreased each year since the year ending March 2017, from 93,593 to 53,207 in the year ending March 2022; a 43.2% decrease.
- The percentage of prosecutions leading to a conviction decreased for the first time since the year ending March 2015, to 76.4% in the year ending March 2022; a decrease of 1.7 percentage points compared with the previous year.

3 . Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system data

[Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system](#)

Dataset | Released on 25 November 2022

Data from across the government on responses to and outcomes of domestic abuse cases in the criminal justice system.

[Domestic abuse in England and Wales - Data Tool](#)

Dataset | Released on 25 November 2022

An interactive tool exploring data at police force area level.

4 . Glossary

Other important terms used in this publication are listed in the [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system](#) glossary.

Charging rate

The charging rate is the number of suspects of Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) domestic abuse-flagged cases that were charged as a proportion of all those that resulted in a legal decision to charge, prosecute, or issue an out-of-court disposal.

Convictions

Cases where the defendant was convicted following a prosecution, comprising of either:

- a conviction after trial: cases in which the defendant pleaded not guilty, but was convicted after the evidence was heard
- a guilty plea: where the defendant pleaded guilty
- a proof in absence: cases comprising of lesser offences which were heard by the court in the absence of the defendant

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.

Prosecutions

All cases where the defendant(s) were charged, summonsed in court, or charged by way of a postal requisition during the period. This includes those proceeding to a trial or guilty plea, those discontinued and those which could not proceed.

5 . Data sources and quality

This publication presents data on responses to and outcomes of domestic abuse cases from different stages of the criminal justice system. Data are sourced from the Home Office, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

The data are not directly comparable because they are collected on different bases (for example, victims, crimes, suspects, or defendants) and different timescales and reference periods are used to collect the data. Cases may also drop out at any stage of the process. Further information on how domestic abuse cases flow through the criminal justice system and the data sources used in this publication can be found in [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system](#).

How the police measure domestic abuse

More information on police measures of domestic abuse can be found in our [Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2022](#) and [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system](#) articles.

6 . Related links

[Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2022](#)

Statistical bulletin | Released 25 November 2022

Figures on domestic abuse from police recorded crime and a number of different organisations.

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

Article | Released 25 November 2022

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

7 . Cite this article

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