

## Article

# Domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2018

Prevalence, long-term trends and attitudes towards domestic abuse experienced by women and men aged between 16 and 59 years and 60 to 74 years, based upon annual findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales.



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## Notice

**25 November 2019**

This publication has been replaced. The latest figures on domestic abuse can now be found in the [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview](#).

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# 1 . Main points

- According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2018, an estimated 7.9% of women (1.3 million) and 4.2% of men (695,000) experienced domestic abuse in the last year.
- There has been no significant change in the prevalence of domestic abuse experienced in the last year, compared with year ending March 2017.

This article also focuses on partner abuse; a subcategory of domestic abuse.

- Women were four times as likely as men to have experienced sexual assault by a partner (including attempts) in the last year.
- Female victims of partner abuse were more likely than male victims to experience non-physical abuse (emotional, financial) and sexual assault by rape or penetration(including attempts); male victims of partner abuse reported a higher level of force than female victims.
- There was a significant decrease in the proportion of female victims of partner abuse reporting to the police in year ending March 2018 compared with the year ending March 2015, the last time this was asked about in the survey.

## 2 . Things you need to know about this release

This article focuses on findings from the self-completion module<sup>1</sup> of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). It covers the extent of, and trends in, domestic abuse among men and women resident in households<sup>2</sup> in England and Wales.

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 living in households in England and Wales. Due to having only one year's worth of data on this new age group, this publication has continued to report primarily on those aged 16 to 59 years. Data for 60- to 74-year-olds are provided separately in some accompanying datasets. As additional years of data on this new age group become available we plan to publish statistics on the whole age range together. The [Crime in England and Wales Quality and Methodology Information report](#) contains important information on the quality and methodology of the data.

Headline CSEW prevalence estimates for domestic abuse included within this article have previously been published in July 2018 alongside the [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018 bulletin](#). Some of the information on the estimated number of victims, how many types of abuse victims experienced, and the personal characteristics of victims included within this article has also been published within the [Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#) report. This article provides more in-depth analysis of the CSEW findings.

Statistics in this article are used to help monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Explore the UK data on our [SDGs reporting platform](#).

### Definition of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse in the CSEW combines the following different types of abuse:

- non-sexual abuse by a partner: physical force, emotional or financial abuse, or threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to them, carried out by a current or former partner
- non-sexual abuse by a family member: physical force, emotional or financial abuse, or threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to them, carried out by a family member other than a partner (father or mother, step-father or mother or other relative)
- sexual assault carried out by a partner or other family member: rape or assault by penetration (including attempts), or indecent exposure or unwanted touching carried out by a current or former partner or other family member
- stalking<sup>3</sup> carried out by a partner or other family member: 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 by a current or former partner or family member<sup>4</sup>

This definition broadly matches the [cross-government definition](#) of domestic abuse, but the CSEW estimates do not currently completely capture the offence of “[coercive and controlling behaviour](#)”<sup>5</sup> (PDF, 296KB), which was introduced on 29 December 2015. This new offence captures coercive control through psychological and emotional abuse that can stop short of physical violence. The CSEW has measured some elements of such non-physical abuse since April 2004, but this doesn’t exactly match the offence.

New survey questions to better estimate experiences of this type of abuse were introduced into the domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking module from April 2017 and are still under development. These questions are currently being run on a split sample basis, to allow the impact on the long-standing time series for domestic abuse to be assessed.

## Measuring domestic abuse

There are two headline measures of domestic abuse in the CSEW: one relates to experiences since the age of 16 years and the other is limited to those experiences in the 12 months prior to interview. The use of self-completion on tablet computers to collect information on domestic abuse in the CSEW allows respondents to feel more at ease when answering these sensitive questions, due to increased confidence in the privacy and confidentiality of the survey.

The self-completion module employs a broader definition of domestic abuse than in the face-to-face module of the survey. The self-completion module covers non-physical abuse, physical abuse (including threats or force), sexual assault and stalking. The face-to-face module measures only one element of domestic abuse; incidents of violence (physical abuse, not including threats), which is referred to as “domestic violence”. As a result, the prevalence of domestic abuse reported in the self-completion module is significantly higher than the prevalence of domestic violence reported in the face-to-face interview.

Further analysis shows that there is a higher level of reporting of force in the self-completion module than in the face-to-face module. Of those aged 16 to 59 years who reported being victims of force in the last 12 months in the self-completion module, only 12.2%<sup>6</sup> reported being a victim of domestic violence in face-to-face interviews (14.8% for women and 8.8% for men). The self-completion module therefore provides a more complete and accurate measure of domestic abuse victimisation. As there are several differences between the coverage and quality of the self-completion and face-to-face estimates, care should be taken when making comparisons between the two.

The self-completion module provides estimates of victims rather than incidents. Unlike estimates from face-to-face interviews, estimates from the self-completion module are not affected by the current method of handling high-frequency repeat victimisation, which caps the number of reported incidents at five<sup>7</sup> (see [Improving estimates of repeat victimisation derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales](#) for more information).

One of the strengths of the 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.

All changes reported in this article are statistically significant at the 5% level unless stated otherwise.

## Notes for: Things you need to know about this release

1. Estimates are based on the self-completion module on domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking.
2. The CSEW does not cover the population living in group residences (for example, care homes or student halls of residence) or other institutions.
3. As the CSEW questions include stalking by a current partner, it is not consistent with the legal definition of stalking and harassment.
4. 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.
5. This offence is now included in the [Home Office Counting Rules \(PDF, 1.2MB\)](#), under the category of "Assault without injury". This is the only specific offence for domestic abuse. Other types of domestic abuse are recorded under more generic offences such as assault.
6. In previous years, this analysis has included victims of any sexual assault by a partner or family member but these victims have now been excluded to be more comparable with the definition of domestic violence used in the face-to-face CSEW interview.
7. The current methodology for handling high-frequency repeat victimisation is under review and work is ongoing to change the current cap of five to a lighter cap derived by applying the 98th percentile of victim incident counts for each crime type.

## 3 . The long-term trends in domestic abuse

The year ending March 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 6.1% of people aged 16 to 59 years (2 million victims) had experienced some form of domestic abuse in the last year. In general, the latest prevalence estimates for all types of domestic abuse experienced in the last 12 months showed no statistically significant change compared with the previous year.

Between the years ending March 2005 to March 2007, the CSEW estimated that around 9% of adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the previous 12 months. The level then decreased significantly to 6.5% in the year ending March 2009<sup>1</sup>.

While the CSEW has since shown little change from year to year in the prevalence of domestic abuse, the cumulative effect of small reductions over time has resulted in a significantly lower prevalence for the latest year (6.1%) compared with the year ending March 2012 (7.0%). This trend has mainly been driven by reductions in partner abuse, which has decreased from a prevalence rate of 5.2% to 4.5% over the same period (Figure 1). In particular, non-sexual partner abuse has fallen from 5.4% in the year ending March 2012 to 4.0% in the year ending March 2018.

The number of victims of domestic abuse estimated by the CSEW has fallen from around 2.3 million in the year ending March 2012 to 2.0 million in the year ending March 2018.

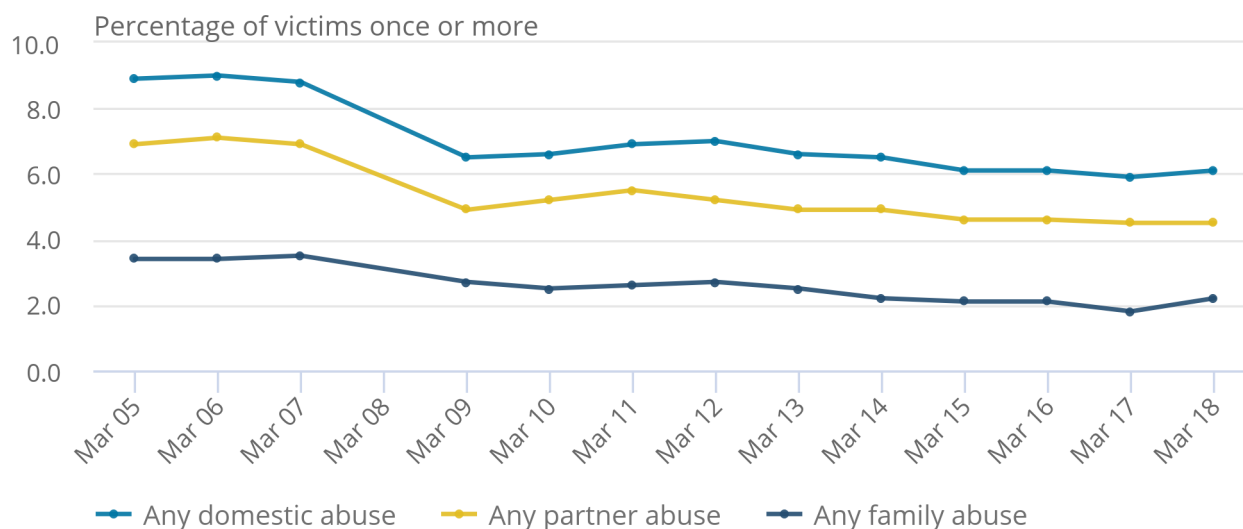
Family abuse has also followed a similar trend with a significantly lower prevalence for the year ending March 2018 (2.2%) compared with the year ending March 2012 (2.7%).

## Figure 1: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years

England and Wales, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2018

### Figure 1: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years

England and Wales, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2018



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

#### Notes:

1. The intimate violence section of chapter 5 of the [User Guide](#) provides definitions of the various types of domestic abuse.
2. 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.

There has been no significant change in the level of stalking by a partner or ex-partner, or stalking by a family member in the year ending March 2018 compared with the year ending March 2005.

Domestic sexual assault has a relatively low prevalence compared with the other types of domestic abuse. There has been no significant change in the prevalence of sexual assault by a partner (including attempts) or sexual assault by a family member (including attempts) in the year ending March 2018 compared with the year ending March 2005.

## Notes for: The long-term trends in domestic abuse

1. Questions on stalking were not asked in the year ending March 2008 survey, so survey estimates on domestic abuse are not available for the year ending March 2008.

## 4 . Prevalence of domestic abuse

### Domestic abuse experienced in the last year

The year ending March 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 6.1% of adults aged 16 to 59 years had experienced domestic abuse in the last year, equivalent to 2 million victims.

The patterns for the different types of domestic abuse experienced in the last year showed that abuse was more commonly perpetrated by a partner than another family member (Figure 2). The year ending March 2018 CSEW showed that:

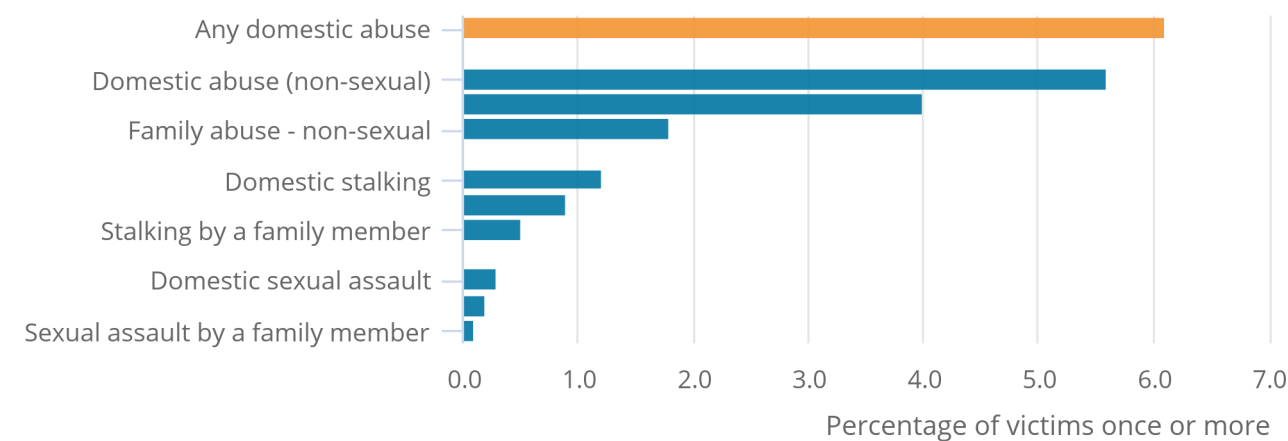
- non-sexual domestic abuse (physical, emotional and financial abuse, including threats) was the most common type of abuse (5.6%), with 4.0% of adults aged 16 to 59 years experiencing this type of abuse by a partner and 1.8% by a family member
- for non-sexual abuse, non-physical abuse (4.1%) was more commonly suffered than threats or force (3.0%)
- domestic stalking was experienced by 1.2% of adults aged 16 to 59 years (0.9% by a partner and 0.5% by a family member)
- domestic sexual assault was experienced by 0.3% of adults in the last year; 0.2% of adults had experienced sexual assault by a partner and 0.1% had experienced sexual assault by a family member

**Figure 2: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by type of abuse**

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 2: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by type of abuse

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

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.

**Domestic abuse experienced since the age of 16 years**

The year ending March 2018 CSEW estimated that 21.0% of people aged 16 to 59 years (7.0 million victims) had experienced some form of domestic abuse since the age of 16 years.

Some form of partner abuse was experienced by 17.4% of adults aged 16 to 59 years, and 8.4% had experienced domestic abuse by a family member. All types of domestic abuse were more likely to be carried out by a partner than another family member<sup>1</sup> (Figure 3). The year ending March 2018 CSEW showed that:



- non-sexual abuse (physical, emotional and financial abuse, including threats) was the most commonly experienced type of domestic abuse (19.2% of adults); 15.3% experienced it from a partner and 6.8% experienced it from a family member
- for non-sexual abuse, threats or force (15.3%) were more commonly experienced than non-physical abuse (12.6%), such as emotional or financial abuse
- domestic stalking was experienced by 7.2% of adults aged 16 to 59 years (6.4% by a partner and 2.0% by a family member)
- domestic sexual assault was experienced by 4.0% of people since the age of 16 years (3.5% by a partner and 1.0% by a family member)
- for domestic sexual assault, indecent exposure or unwanted sexual touching (3.6%) was more commonly experienced than rape or assault by penetration (2.2%)

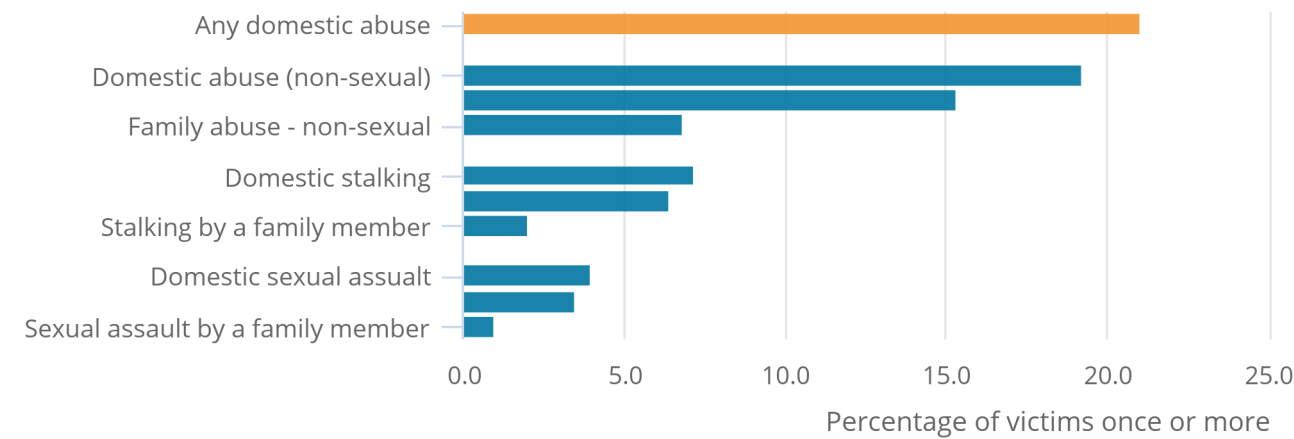
More information on sexual assault and stalking can be found in the article [Sexual offences in England and Wales: year ending March 2017](#) and dataset [Stalking: findings from the CSEW](#), year ending March 2018.

**Figure 3: Prevalence of domestic abuse since the age of 16 years for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by type of abuse**

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 3: Prevalence of domestic abuse since the age of 16 years for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by type of abuse

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

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.

Notes for: Prevalence of domestic abuse

1. 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 . Groups of people most likely to be victims of domestic abuse

The personal characteristics of Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) respondents are asked about at the time of their interview although some of these characteristics may differ to what they were at the time they experienced domestic abuse. Victimization varied by a number of personal characteristics, but many of these characteristics will be closely associated (for example, marital status and age) so caution is needed in the interpretation of the effects of these different characteristics when viewed in isolation.

### Sex

As in previous years, women were more likely to experience domestic abuse than men, both since the age of 16 years (28.9% compared with 13.2%) and in the last year (7.9% compared with 4.2%). The year ending March 2018 CSEW showed:

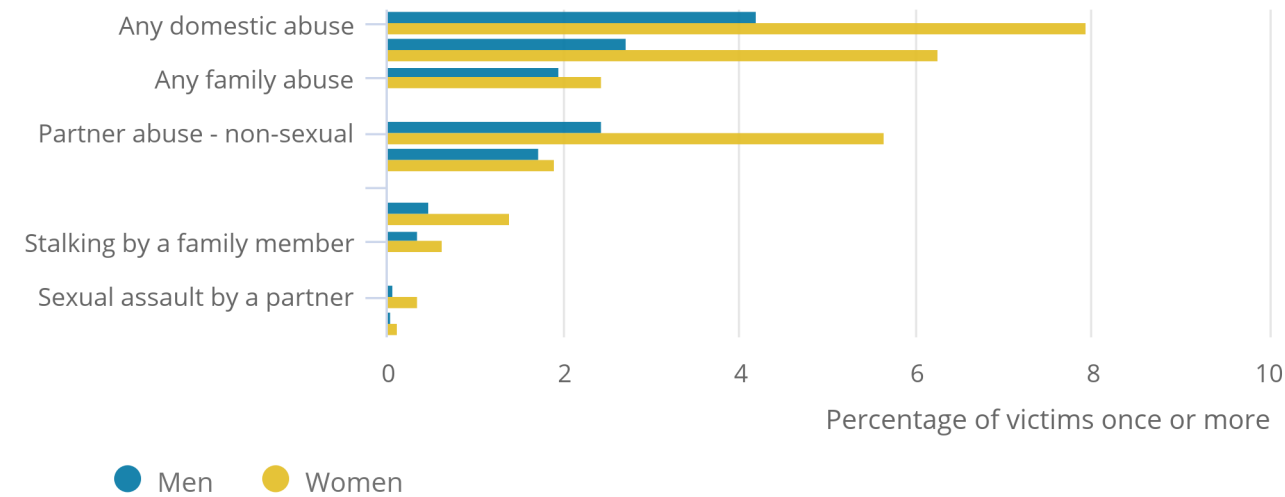
- an estimated 4.8 million women and 2.2 million men aged 16 to 59 years had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 years
- an estimated 1.3 million women and 695,000 men aged 16 to 59 years had experienced domestic abuse in the last year
- non-sexual partner abuse was the most common type of domestic abuse experienced in the last year for both women (5.6%) and men (2.4%) (Figure 4)
- domestic stalking was experienced by 1.8% of women and 0.7% of men in the last year
- women were around four times as likely as men to have experienced sexual assault by a partner in the last year (0.4% compared with 0.1%) and nine times as likely to have experienced it since the age of 16 years (6.3% compared with 0.7%)

**Figure 4: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by sex and type of abuse**

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 4: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by sex and type of abuse

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

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.

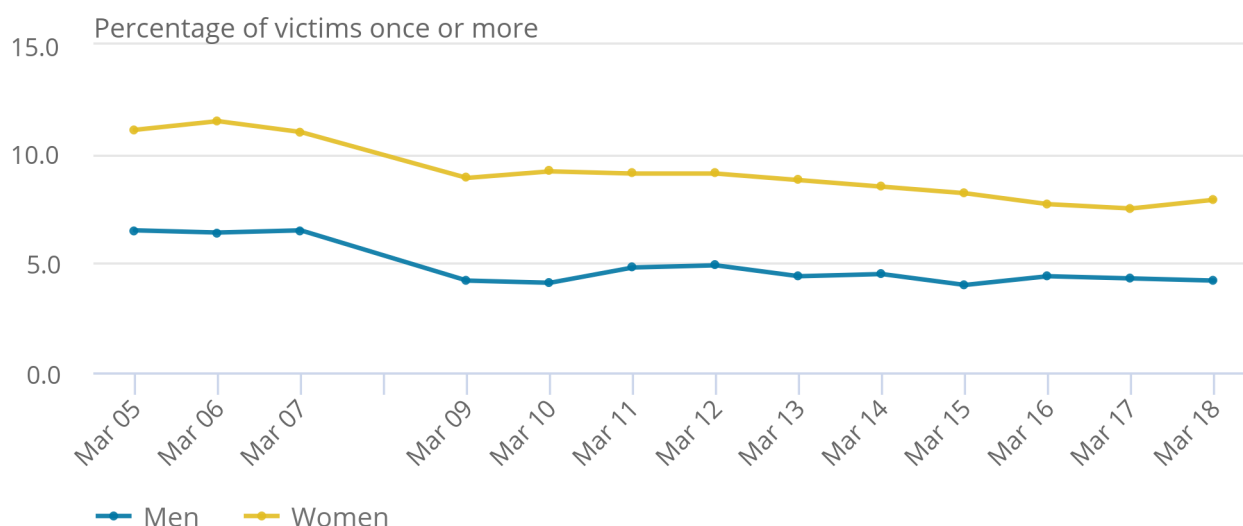
The year ending March 2018 CSEW estimated 4.2% of men aged 16 to 59 years had experienced some form of domestic abuse in the last 12 months. This is a significant decrease from 6.5% in the year ending March 2005. The prevalence of experiencing domestic abuse in the last year among women had also decreased significantly since the year ending March 2005, from 11.1% to 7.9% (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: 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 2018

## Figure 5: 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 2018



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

### 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.

However, the CSEW estimates do not currently completely capture the new offence of coercive and controlling behaviour. Research suggests that when [coercive and controlling behaviour is taken into account, the differences between the experiences of male and female victims become more apparent](#). New survey questions to better estimate experiences of this type of abuse were introduced from April 2017 on a split sample basis and are undergoing development.

## Age

The main findings from the year ending March 2018 CSEW were:

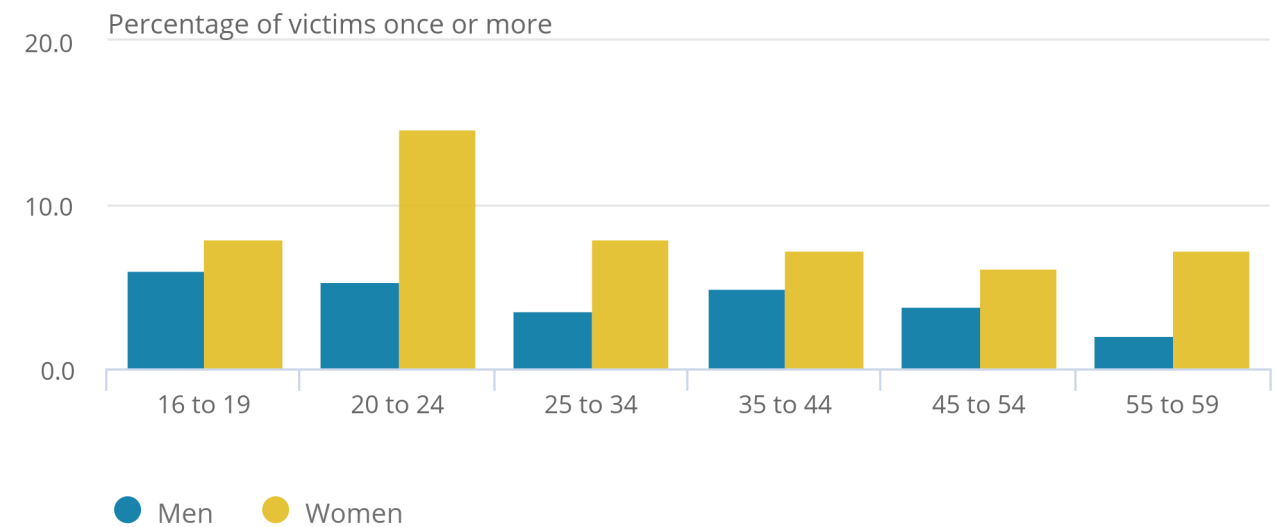
- women aged 20 to 24 years were significantly more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last 12 months than women in any other age group (Figure 6)
- men aged 55 to 59 years were less likely to be a victim of domestic abuse in the last year compared with all other age groups except those aged 25 to 34 years

Figure 6: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years by age and sex

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 6: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years by age and sex

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

Marital status<sup>1</sup>

The main findings were:

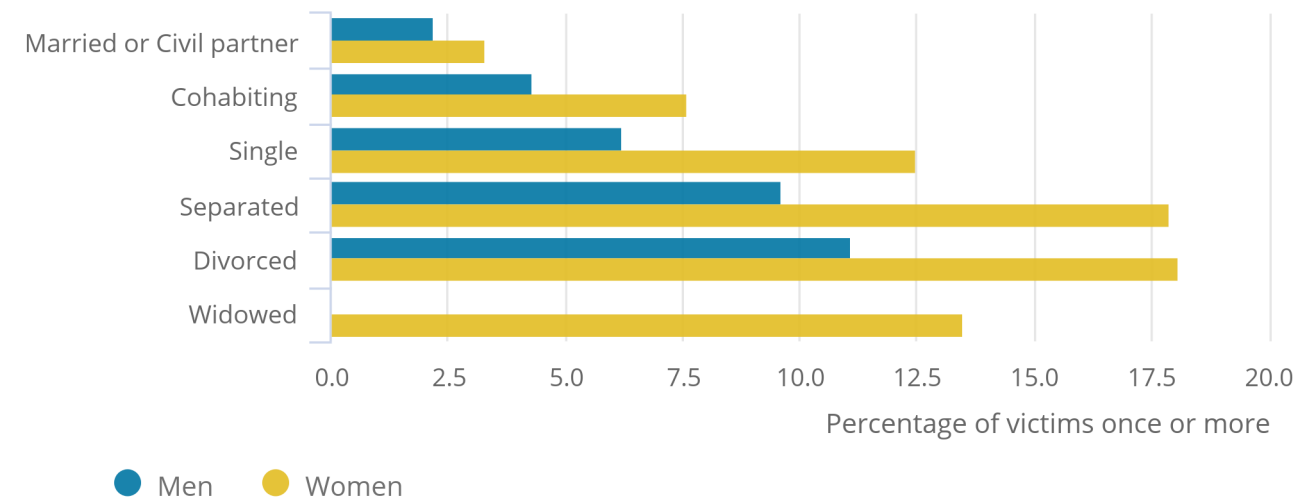
- divorced women (18.1%) were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse in the last year than those who were married, civil partnered, cohabiting or single (Figure 7)
- men who were married or civil partnered (2.2%) were less likely to be victims of domestic abuse in the last year than men who were divorced, separated or single

**Figure 7: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by marital status and sex**

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

**Figure 7: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by marital status and sex**

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

Notes:

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

## Long-term illness or disability

The main findings were:

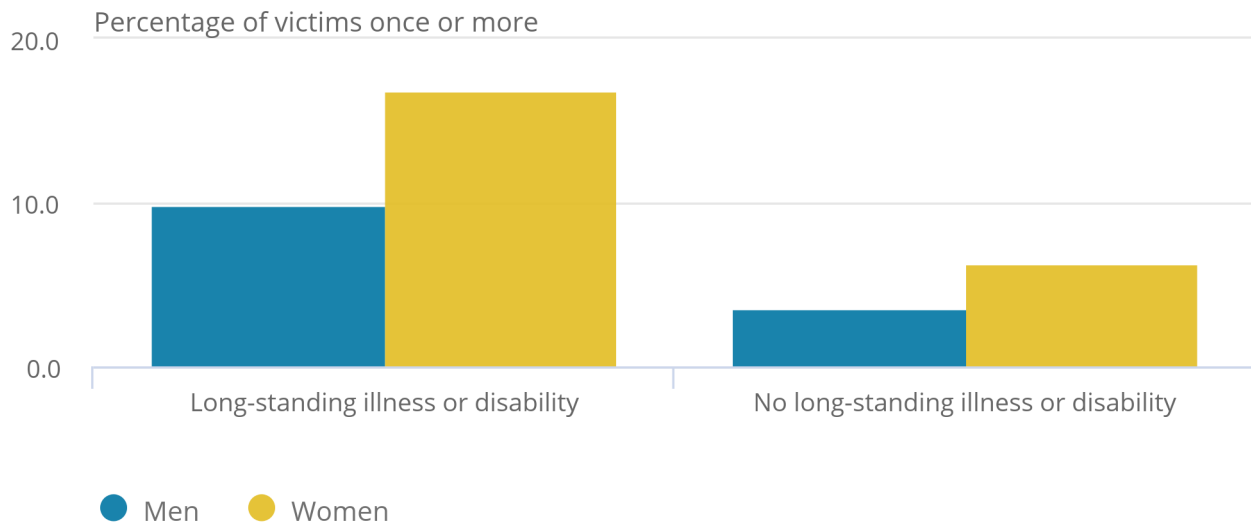
- those with a long-term illness or disability were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse in the last year than those without; this was true for both men (9.8% compared with 3.5%) and women (16.8% compared with 6.3%, Figure 8)
- this difference was true for each of the different types of domestic abuse excluding sexual assault

**Figure 8: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by long-term illness or disability and sex**

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 8: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by long-term illness or disability and sex

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

## Household structure

The main finding was:

- both men and women within a single parent household were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse in the last 12 months than those living in a household with no children and those living in a household with other adults and children; this was true for both men and women (Figure 9)

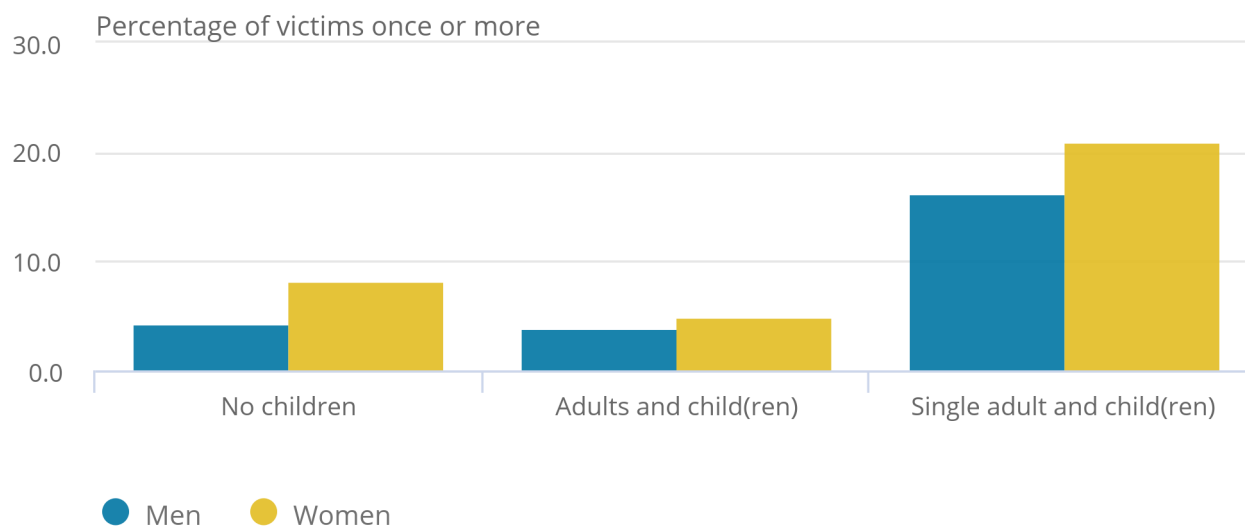


**Figure 9: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by household structure and sex**

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

## Figure 9: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by household structure and sex

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

## Household income

The main findings were:

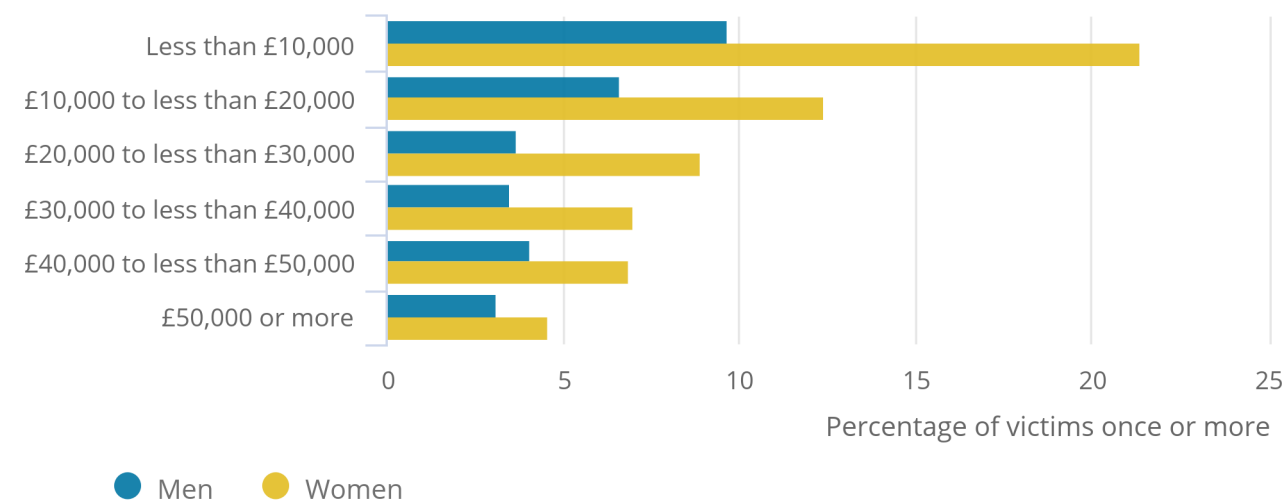
- women in the two lowest household income brackets were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse in the last 12 months than those in other household income groups (Figure 10); in general, the prevalence of domestic abuse in the last 12 months for women declined as income increased
- the pattern was less pronounced for men, but men in the lowest household income bracket were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse in the last year than those in the other household income groups excluding the “£10,000 to less than £20,000” income bracket (Figure 10)

**Figure 10: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by household income and sex**

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

**Figure 10: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by household income and sex**

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

**Notes for: Groups of people most likely to be victims of domestic abuse**

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

**6 . Types of abuse victims experienced**

Although the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is a large sample survey, there are a relatively small number of victims of the different types of domestic abuse interviewed in any one year. Consequently, analysis on how many types of domestic abuse were experienced by victims has been completed on a dataset combining the three latest survey years; the year ending March 2016 to the year ending March 2018.

The majority of domestic abuse victims (80.5%) suffered one type of abuse (Figure 11). Of those cases, the most commonly experienced type of abuse was non-sexual partner abuse, with 51.8% of all victims experiencing only this type of abuse in the last year<sup>1</sup>.

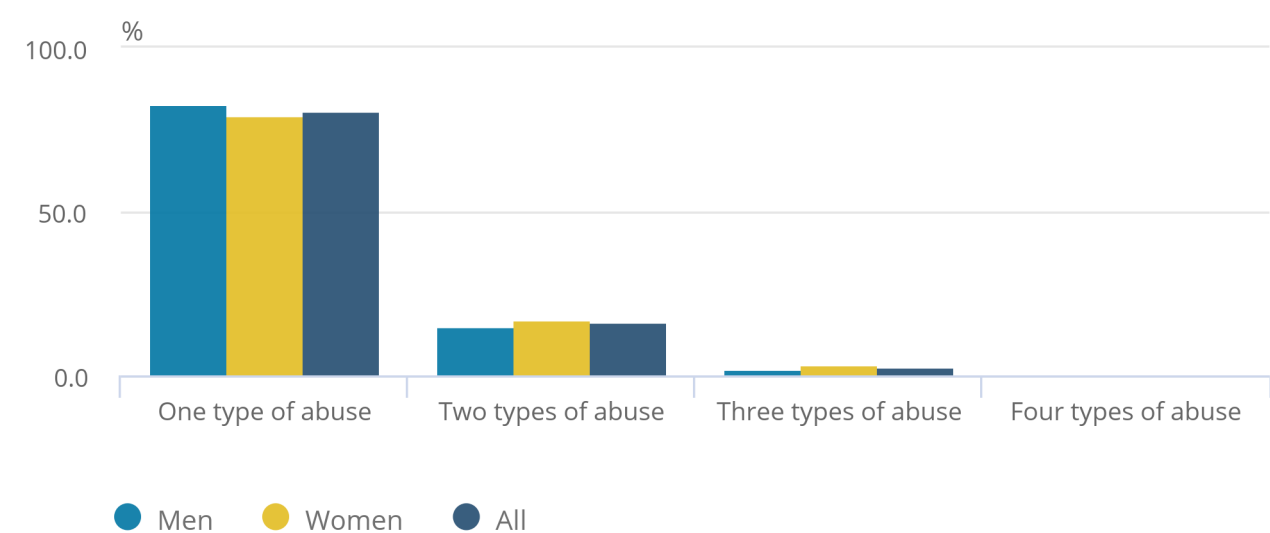
A higher proportion of women than men experienced multiple types of abuse in the last year (20.8% compared with 17.1%).

**Figure 11: Number of types of abuse experienced by victims of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years**

England and Wales, year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2018

Figure 11: Number of types of abuse experienced by victims of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years

England and Wales, year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2018



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

Notes:

1. These data are based on combined data from year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2018.

For experiences of two types of abuse, non-sexual partner abuse and stalking were the most commonly experienced combination (7.2%). Less than 1% of victims of domestic abuse suffered all four types of domestic abuse.

Notes for: Types of abuse victims experienced

1. For the three-year dataset, “in the last year” refers to the 12 months prior to interview and covers a four-year recall period from April 2015 to March 2018.

7 . Type of partner abuse experienced

Further questions were asked in the year ending March 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) to provide more detail on the circumstances of partner abuse experienced in the past year.

Female partner abuse victims were more likely to experience non-physical abuse (emotional, financial) (72.6%) than to experience physical abuse such as force (28.0%), or threats (37.8%). Male partner abuse victims were more likely to experience non-physical abuse (57.0%) than threats (28.7%) (Figure 12).

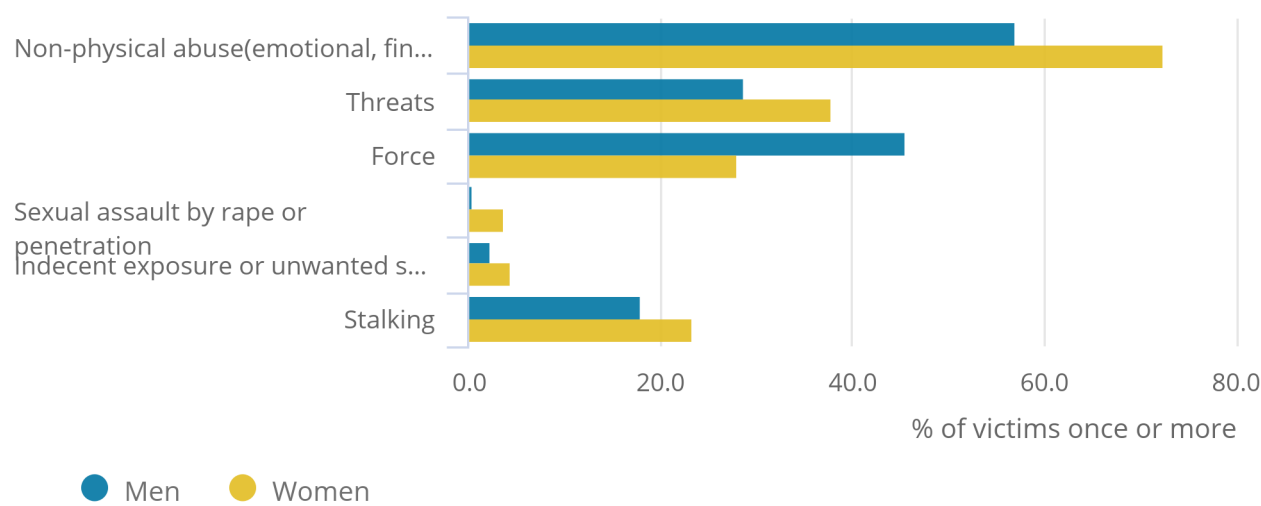
Female victims of partner abuse were more likely than men to report experiencing non-physical abuse (emotional, financial) (72.6% for women and 57.0% for men) and sexual assault by rape or penetration including attempts (3.8% and 0.5% respectively). In contrast, male victims reported a higher level of force (45.7%) than women (28.0%). There was no significant difference between female and male victims in the prevalence of experiences of threats, indecent exposure or unwanted sexual touching, or stalking<sup>1</sup>.

**Figure 12: Type of partner abuse experienced by partner abuse victims in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by sex**

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 12: Type of partner abuse experienced by partner abuse victims in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by sex

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

Notes:

1. Respondents are asked to select all types of abuse they have experienced in the last year.
2. Sexual assault by rape or penetration, includes attempts.

Using the demographic breakdowns in Appendix Tables 8 and 9 a small number of groups of heavily victimised individuals were identified. Further analysis was carried out to see if these groups were more likely to suffer from particular types of partner abuse<sup>2</sup>. Due to small numbers of individuals from these heavily victimised groups being interviewed in any one year, a three-year dataset from the year ending March 2016 to the year ending March 2018 was used to carry out this analysis. The analysis showed:

- women who were separated were more likely to experience threats or stalking than women who were not separated
- women within a single parent household were more likely to experience threats, force or stalking than women who were within a two-parent household, or a household with no children
- women who were aged 20 to 24 years were more likely to experience force than women in other age groups
- women with a long-term illness or disability were more likely to experience non-physical abuse and indecent exposure or unwanted sexual touching than women without a disability or illness

## Notes for: Type of partner abuse experienced

1. The definition of stalking applied in the CSEW covers a wider range of actions and behaviours than the legal definition and includes being followed, being sent unwanted messages that were obscene or threatening and having personal property interfered with. The CSEW asks respondents about typical behaviours associated with stalking rather than the term itself. This ensures that actions and behaviours experienced are picked up by the survey rather than the respondent's interpretation of them.
2. Questions on types of partner abuse are asked in the domestic abuse, sexual victimisation and stalking module.

## 8 . Characteristics of partner abuse

Questions were asked in the year ending March 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) to provide more detail on the circumstances of partner abuse experienced in the past year.

### Alcohol and drug consumption

Victims of partner abuse in the last year were asked whether they thought the offender (or offenders) was under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs at the time of the incident. In addition, they were asked whether they (the victim) were under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs at the time of the incident. For those who had experienced more than one incident, only the most recent incident was asked about.

Victims were more likely to report that they believed the offender was under the influence of alcohol (16.6%) rather than illicit drugs (10.6%). There were no statistically significant differences between the proportions of female and male victims perceiving the offender to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Victims were more likely to report that the offender was under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs than they themselves. However, 8.1% of victims reported that they were under the influence of alcohol and 1.7% reported that they were under the influence of illicit drugs the last time they suffered abuse. There was no statistically significant difference between male and female victims with regards to reporting whether they were under the influence of alcohol or under the influence of illicit drugs.

Caution should be taken interpreting these figures due to the relatively large proportion of "don't know" or "don't want to answer" responses for some of these questions. This was particularly the case for the question on whether the offender or the respondent was under the influence of alcohol (21.0% and 14.5% respectively).

Also included in the self-completion module is a section on drugs misuse and alcohol consumption that includes questions on the level of the respondents' general alcohol consumption and illicit drug-taking. Caution should be taken when making inferences about the relationship between alcohol consumption, illicit drug-taking and partner abuse victimisation. The victims' alcohol consumption and illicit drug use may affect or be affected by their experience of partner abuse.

Around twice as many adults aged between 16 and 59 years who had taken illicit drugs in the last year reported being a victim of partner abuse compared with those who hadn't taken drugs in the last year (9.7% compared with 3.9%).

## **Partner abuse victims leaving shared accommodation**

As part of the suite of follow-up questions on the nature of partner abuse, those who had experienced partner abuse in the last year were asked if they shared accommodation with their abusive partner, if so, whether they left that shared accommodation and other information about the shared accommodation. If the victim had more than one abusive partner, these questions were asked of the most recent abusive partner.

Around a fifth (21.4%) of partner abuse victims that reported abuse in the last year stated that they currently shared, or had previously shared, accommodation with their abusive partner. Of these victims, 34.4% reported leaving the accommodation because of the abuse, even if it was for only one night.

Reasons mentioned most frequently for not leaving the shared accommodation were "love/feelings for partner" (47.2%), "never considered leaving" (37.1%) and "presence of children" (36.7%).

## **Presence of children in partner abuse victimisations**

In households with at least one child under the age of 16 years, respondents were asked if any children in the household saw or heard what happened during the most recent partner abuse victimisation. In 40.9% of cases of partner abuse there was at least one child under the age of 16 years living in the household. Of those cases where children were present in the household, in 20.5% of cases the children saw or heard what happened, in 64.9% of cases the respondent stated that the children did not see or hear what happened, and in 14.6% of cases the respondent didn't know whether the children saw or heard what happened or didn't wish to answer.

# **9 . Effects of partner abuse and medical support**

Victims of partner abuse in the last year were asked questions on physical injury and other, non-physical effects experienced as a result of the abuse. These questions were asked of any abuse experienced in the 12 months prior to interview, in the year ending March 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales.

The majority of partner abuse victims (74.5%) did not sustain a physical injury as a result of the abuse, and for those that did sustain an injury, these were often relatively minor injuries. This is in the context that over half of partner abuse victims (67.8%) reported experiencing non-physical abuse.

A quarter of partner abuse victims (25.5%) reported that they sustained some sort of physical injury. The most common types of injuries sustained were minor bruising or black eye (18.0%) and scratches (11.3%). There was no significant difference between the prevalence of any physical injury overall for male and female victims (31.8% and 22.7% respectively).

Victims were presented with a list of other non-physical effects<sup>1</sup> and were asked if they had sustained any of these as a result of the abuse. There was no significant difference between the prevalence of non-physical effects overall for male and female victims (47.5% and 55.8% respectively).

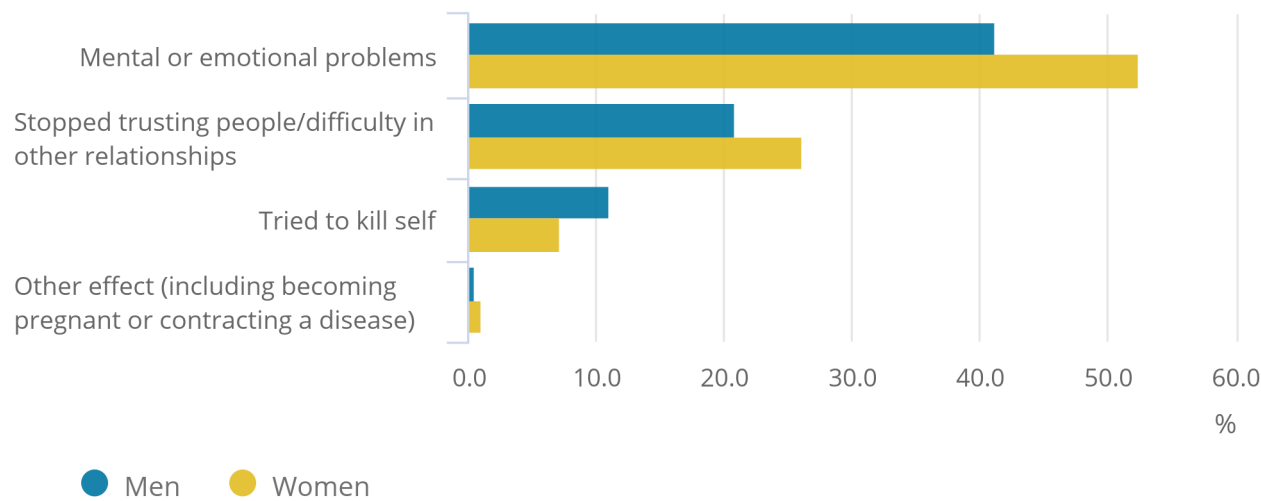
For both male and female victims, the category most likely to be reported was “mental or emotional problems” (41.2% of male victims and 52.4% of female victims) followed by “stopped trusting people or difficulty in other relationships” (20.8% of male and 26.1% of female victims) (Figure 13).

**Figure 13: Non-physical effects felt as a result of the partner abuse experienced in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by sex**

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

Figure 13: Non-physical effects felt as a result of the partner abuse experienced in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by sex

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

Partner abuse victims who had sustained a physical injury or had experienced other effects as a result of the abuse were also asked if they had received medical attention. Around a third (33.1%) of partner abuse victims who had experienced any physical injury or other effects received some sort of medical attention.

Victims who had received medical attention were also asked where they received it; with the majority (83.1%) doing so at a GP or doctor’s surgery, 36.4% at a specialist mental health or psychiatric service <sup>2</sup> and 12.2% had gone to a hospital’s Accident and Emergency department.

Additional analysis was carried out on victims who received medical attention. It was found that of those victims who received medical attention, 73.6% were female and 26.4% were male. Looking at the type of effects felt by those who received medical attention, 42.0% experienced both a physical injury and other effect, 56.8% experienced only non-physical effects and 1.2% experienced only a physical injury.

**Notes for: Effects of partner abuse and medical support**

1. Such as “mental or emotional problems” or “stopped trusting people/difficulty in other relationships”.
2. Figures do not add to 100 as respondents can give more than one answer.

## **10 . Sources of support for partner abuse victims**

Victims of partner abuse in the last year (prior to interview, in the year ending March 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales) were asked who they had spoken to about the abuse they had experienced. For the purpose of this analysis these have been split into three types of support: someone known personally to them (for example, a friend or relative), someone in a professional organisation (for example, police, health professionals or a local council department) and someone in another support organisation (for example, Victim Support or a helpline).

The majority (72.4%) of victims told someone about the partner abuse that they suffered, with women (81.3%) being more likely to tell someone than men (50.8%). Both female and male victims were most likely to tell someone they knew personally about the abuse (73.5% and 43.7% respectively) with victims most commonly telling a friend or neighbour (53.3% of women and 31.6% of men), followed by telling a family member or relative (46.2% women and 25.3% men).

Just under a third (31.2%) of all victims of partner abuse aged 16 to 59 years told someone in an official position about the abuse. There was no significant difference in those who told other support professionals or organisations between women and men (34.2% and 24.1% respectively). Female victims were more likely to tell Victim Support (10.8% compared with 2.5%) or a specialist support service (7.3% compared with 1.2%) than male victims.

### **Police and the criminal justice system**

Respondents who answered that they had been a victim of partner abuse were asked questions surrounding issues on reporting the abuse to the police.

For victims of partner abuse, 17.3% had reported the abuse to the police (Table 1). For those that did not report the abuse, the most common reasons given were: the abuse was too trivial or not worth reporting (45.5%), it was a private, family matter and not the business of the police (39.5%), and the victim didn't think the police could help (34.2%). There was no significant difference in the proportion of victims who told the police about the partner abuse they experienced between the years ending March 2015 and March 2018. However, there was a significant decrease in the proportion of female victims reporting to the police in year ending March 2018 compared with the years ending March 2011, 2013 and 2015.



**Table 1: Crime Survey for England and Wales proportion of victims aged 16 to 59 years who told the police about the partner abuse experienced in the last 12 months, by sex, year ending March 2011 to year ending March 2018**

England and Wales	Adults aged 16 to 59			
	Apr '10 to Mar '11	Apr '12 to Mar '13	Apr '14 to Mar '15	Apr '17 to Mar '18
	Percentage			
Men	10.5	10.4	10.4	14.7
Women	29.5	26.9	25.8	18.4
All	23.0	21.6	21.3	17.3
Unweighted base - number of adults	850	682	660	368

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

Notes:

1. Due to question rotation, data are only available for the years included in the table.

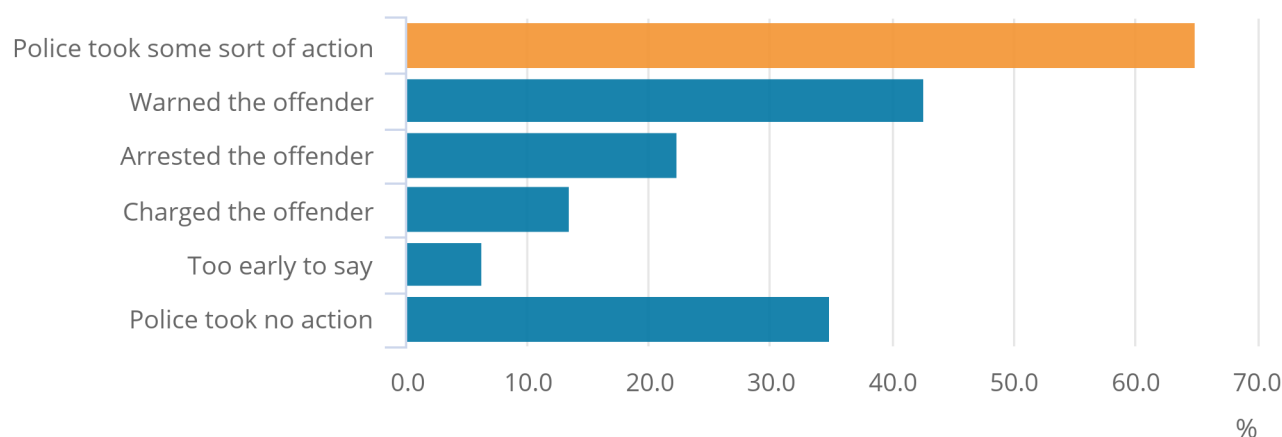
In incidents where the police came to know about the abuse, respondents were asked what actions were taken by the police. The police took some sort of action in 65.0% of cases. The most common action taken by the police was to warn the offender (42.6%) or arrest the offender (22.3%). In 13.4% of cases the offender was charged (Figure 14).

**Figure 14: What action was taken by the police when told about the partner abuse for adults aged 16 to 59 years**

England and Wales, year ending March 2018

## Figure 14: What action was taken by the police when told about the partner abuse for adults aged 16 to 59 years

England and Wales, year ending March 2018



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

Victims who told the police about the partner abuse they experienced were asked how satisfied they were with the outcome, whether they felt safer as a result of the outcome and how helpful they found the police. Over half (57.9%) were either very satisfied (25.2%) or fairly satisfied (32.7%) with their experience with the police and Crown Prosecution Service. Just over a third (38.3%) felt safer as a result of the action, while a quarter felt less safe (26.6%).

Around half (53.0%) found the police either very helpful (28.4%) or fairly helpful (24.6%). While the rest of respondents found them either slightly helpful (22.8%) or not at all helpful (24.2%).

## 11 . Quality and methodology

The [Crime in England and Wales Quality and Methodology Information](#) report contains important information on:

- the strengths and limitations of the data and how it compares with related data
- uses and users of the data
- how the output was created
- the quality of the output including the accuracy of the data