

Article

Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2022

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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Table of contents

1. [Other pages in this release](#)
2. [Main points](#)
3. [Understanding domestic abuse](#)
4. [Sex](#)
5. [Age](#)
6. [Disability](#)
7. [Ethnicity](#)
8. [Marital status](#)
9. [Household structure](#)
10. [Area](#)
11. [Domestic homicide](#)
12. [Domestic abuse in England and Wales data](#)
13. [Glossary](#)
14. [Data sources and quality](#)
15. [Related links](#)
16. [Cite this article](#)

1 . Other pages in this release

- [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2022](#)
- [Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2022](#)
- [Partner abuse in detail, England and Wales: year ending March 2022](#)
- [Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system, England and Wales: November 2022](#)
- [Domestic abuse victim services, England and Wales: 2022](#)
- [Redevelopment of domestic abuse statistics: research update November 2022](#)

2 . Main points

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2022 shows the following trends.

- An estimated 6.9% of women (1.7 million) and 3.0% of men (699,000) experienced domestic abuse in the last year.
- A higher proportion of adults aged 20 to 24 years were victims of any domestic abuse in the last year compared with adults aged 55 years and over.
- A higher percentage of adults with a disability experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without.
- A higher proportion of adults who lived in single-parent households experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those living in no-children households or households with other adults and children, however, household structure may have changed as a result of abuse experienced.

Crimes recorded by the police show the following trends.

- In the year ending March 2022, the victim was female in 74.1% of domestic abuse-related crimes.
- Between the year ending March 2019 and the year ending March 2021, 72.1% of victims of domestic homicide were female compared with 12.3% of victims of non-domestic homicide.

Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data presented in this release, for the year ending March 2022, are not badged as [National Statistics](#). They are based on six months of data collection between October 2021 and March 2022. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period and lower response rates on the quality of the estimates.

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 return of face-to-face interviewing allowed the collection of data on domestic abuse to restart. The year ending March 2022 data are based on a six-month collection period from the face-to-face CSEW, between October 2021 and March 2022.

On the return of face-to-face CSEW interviewing in October 2021, the upper age limit of respondents completing the self-completion modules was removed (it was previously increased from 59 years to 74 years in April 2017).

The Home Office collects data on the number of domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes recorded by the police. For the year ending March 2022, 26 police forces supplied data to the Home Office Data Hub. Our [Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics tables](#) detail the police forces that provided data.

4 . Sex

For the year ending March 2022, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 1.7 million women and 699,000 men aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the last year. This is a prevalence rate of approximately 7 in 100 women and 3 in 100 men (Figure 1).

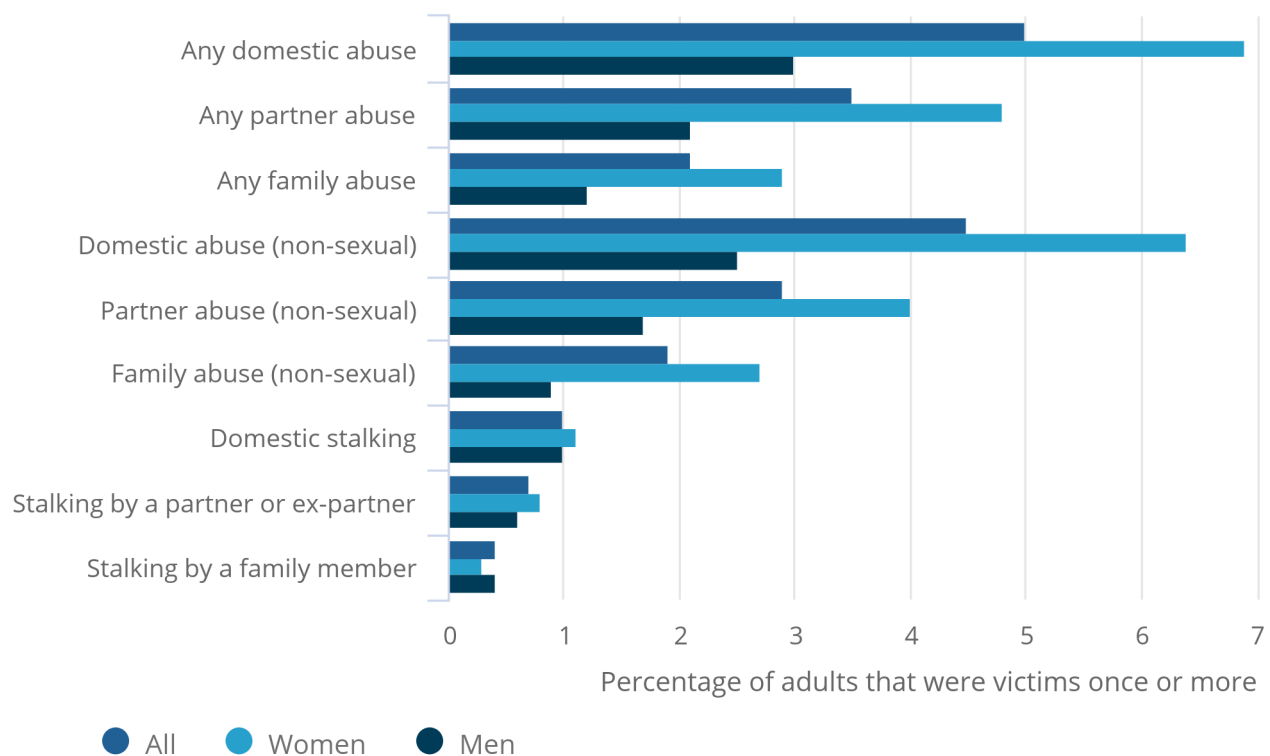
A significantly higher proportion of women were victims of each of the overarching types of abuse than men, with the exceptions of domestic stalking, stalking by a partner or ex-partner and stalking by a family member.

Figure 1: A higher proportion of women than men were victims of domestic abuse in the last year

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 years and over, by sex and type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending March 2022

Figure 1: A higher proportion of women than men were victims of domestic abuse in the last year

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 years and over, by sex and type of abuse, England and Wales, year ending March 2022



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

Notes:

1. Sexual assault categories include attempts.
2. 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.
3. Estimates for "Domestic sexual assault", "Sexual assault by a partner" and "Sexual assault by a family member" are unavailable because of disclosure constraints.
4. Data for the year ending March 2022 are not National Statistics. They are based on six months of data collection from the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales between October 2021 and March 2022. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period and lower response rates on the quality of the estimates.

Following the removal of the upper age limit for survey respondents in October 2021, when comparing CSEW data over time, we use the 16 to 59 years age range.

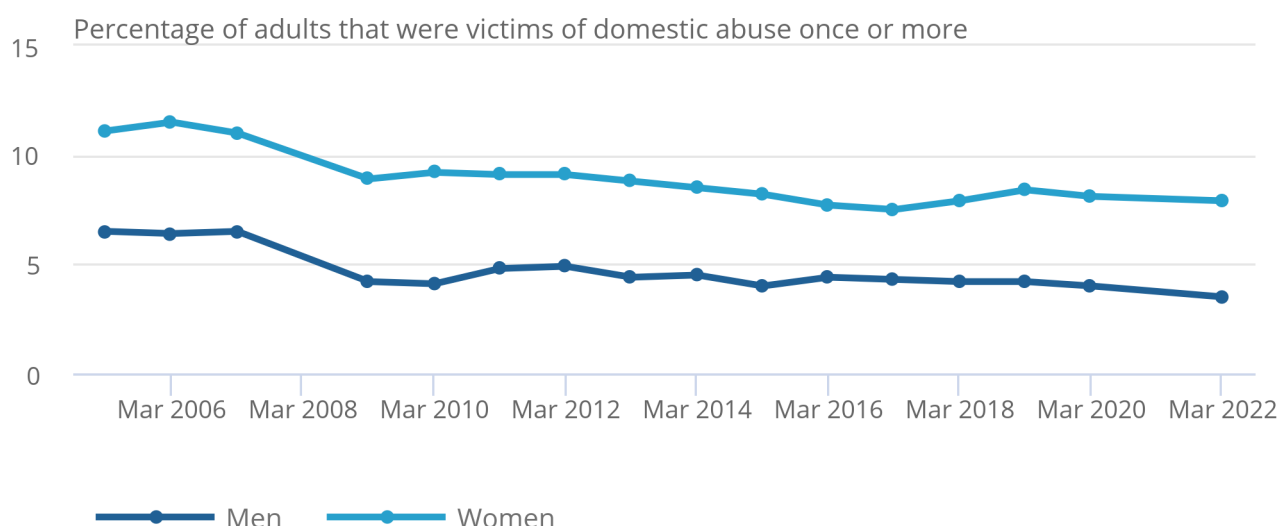
The prevalence of domestic abuse experienced by men and women aged 16 to 59 years has not changed significantly in the year ending March 2022 compared with the year ending March 2020, the last time the data were collected. In the year ending March 2022, 7.9% of women and 3.5% of men aged 16 to 59 years had experienced domestic abuse, compared with 8.1% of women and 4.0% of men in the year ending March 2020 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: There was no significant change in the prevalence of domestic abuse for both men and women in the year ending March 2022, compared with the year ending March 2020

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 2022

Figure 2: There was no significant change in the prevalence of domestic abuse for both men and women in the year ending March 2022, compared with the year ending March 2020

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 2022



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

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.
2. No data point is available for the year ending March 2021 because domestic abuse questions were not asked on the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW).
3. Data for the year ending March 2022 are not National Statistics. They are based on six months of data collection from the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales between October 2021 and March 2022. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period and lower response rates on the quality of the estimates.

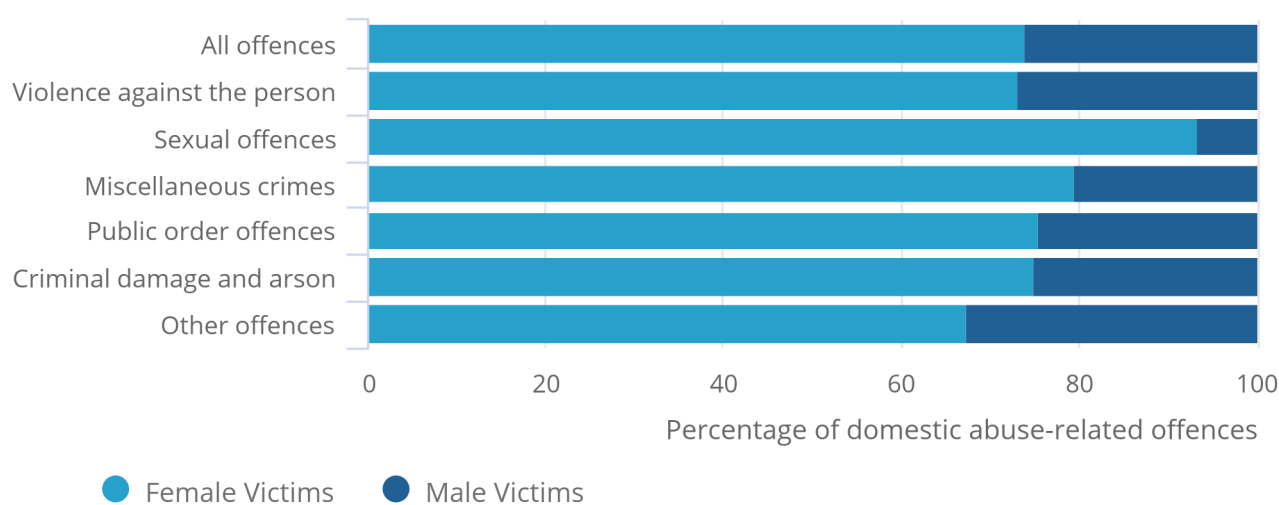
Data supplied from 26 police forces showed the victim was female in 74.1% of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police in the year ending March 2022. This proportion was similar for most offence categories. For domestic abuse-related sexual offences, the proportion of victims that were female was higher (93.5%, Figure 3).

Figure 3: There was a higher proportion of 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 groups, England and Wales, year ending March 2022

Figure 3: There was a higher proportion of 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 groups, England and Wales, year ending March 2022



Source: Home Office Data Hub – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Based on 26 forces with adequate data.

5 . Age

Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data presented for the year ending March 2022, are not badged as [National Statistics](#). They are based on a six-month collection period from the face-to-face CSEW, between October 2021 and March 2022. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period and lower response rates on the quality of the estimates and significance testing between age groups.

The CSEW year ending March 2022 showed that a significantly higher proportion of adults aged 20 to 24 years were victims of any domestic abuse (10.2%) compared with those in age categories of 55 years and over. The percentage of victims aged 75 years and over was significantly lower than those aged between 20 and 54 years (Figure 4). All differences across other age groups were not significant.

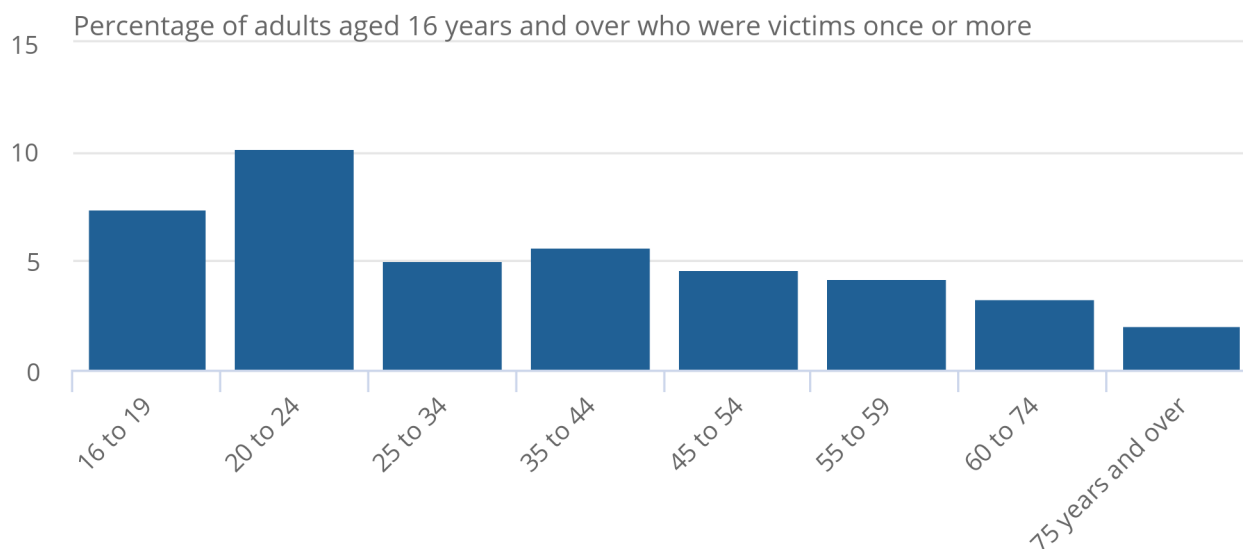
There were few significant differences between men in different age groups who had experienced domestic abuse in the last year. The same was seen when comparing estimates of women across age groups.

Figure 4: A higher percentage of adults aged 20 to 24 years were victims of domestic abuse in the last year than those aged 55 years and over

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 years and over by age, England and Wales, year ending March 2022

Figure 4: A higher percentage of adults aged 20 to 24 years were victims of domestic abuse in the last year than those aged 55 years and over

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 years and over by age, England and Wales, year ending March 2022



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

Notes:

1. Data for the year ending March 2022 are not National Statistics. They are based on six months of data collection from the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales between October 2021 and March 2022. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period and lower response rates on the quality of the estimates.

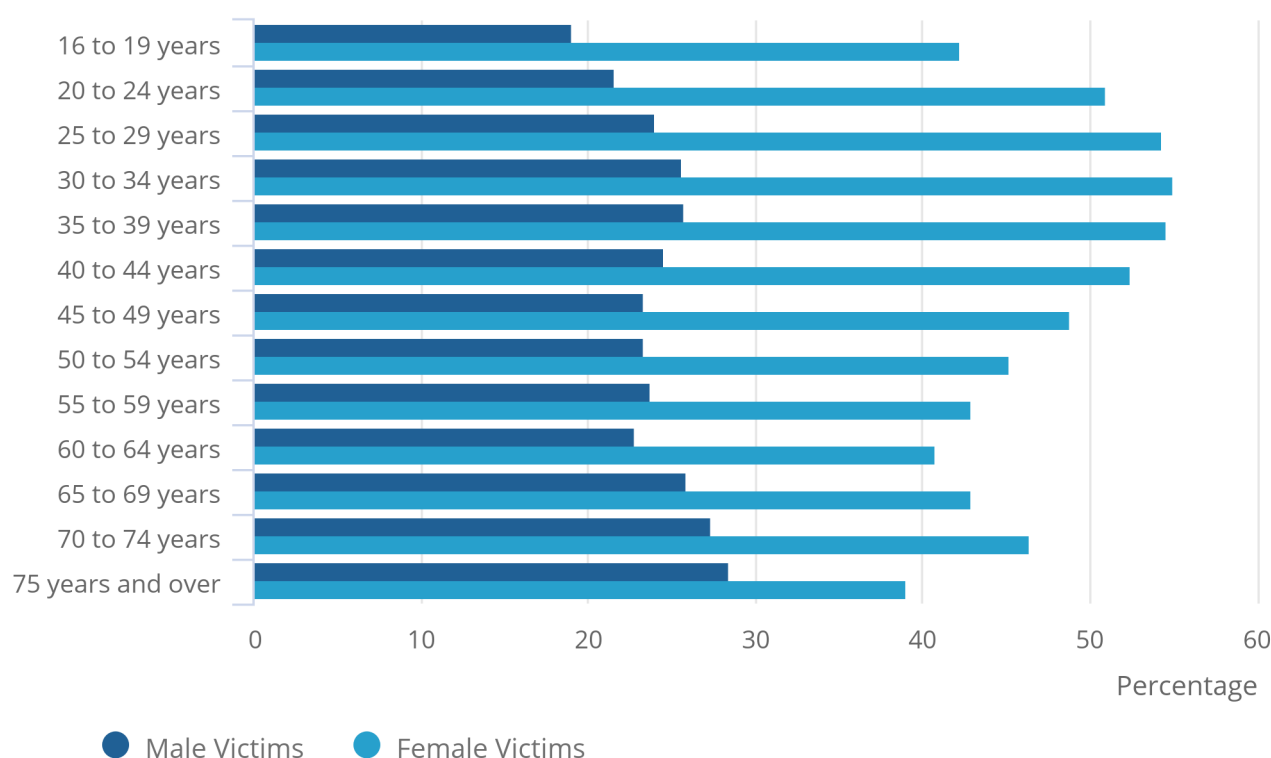
Data supplied from 26 police forces showed that the proportion of police recorded violence against the person offences identified as domestic abuse-related in England and Wales was over 50% for women in age groups between 20 and 44 years. The proportion for men was between 20% and 30% for all age groups except men aged between 16 and 19 years (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Over half of violence against the person offences were identified as domestic abuse related for women aged between 20 and 44 years

Proportion of violence against the person offences recorded by the police, which were identified as domestic abuse related, by age and sex of victims, England and Wales, year ending March 2022

Figure 5: Over half of violence against the person offences were identified as domestic abuse related for women aged between 20 and 44 years

Proportion of violence against the person offences recorded by the police, which were identified as domestic abuse related, by age and sex of victims, England and Wales, year ending March 2022



Source: Home Office Data Hub – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Estimates are based on 26 forces with adequate data.

6 . Disability

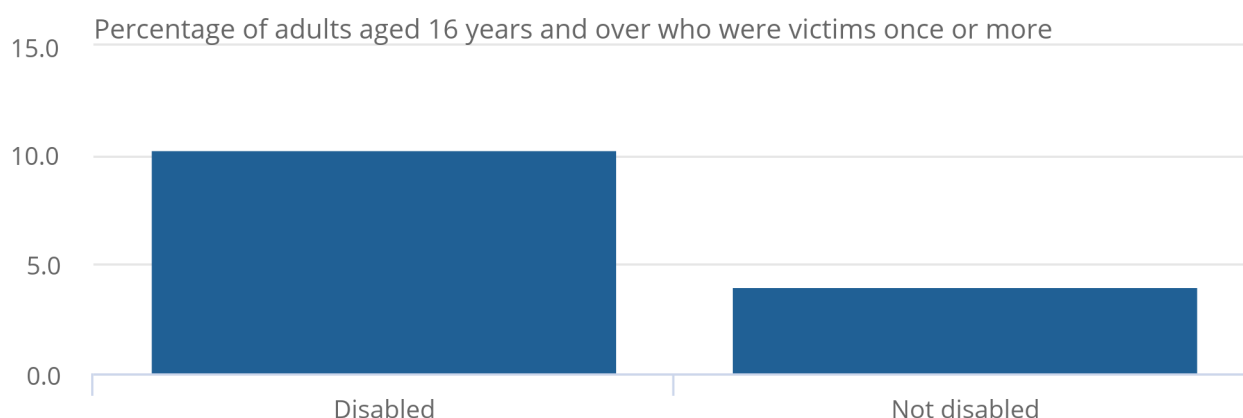
For the year ending March 2022, the Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that a significantly higher percentage of adults with a disability experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without (Figure 6).

Figure 6: A higher percentage of adults with a disability experienced domestic abuse than those without

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 years and over, by disability, England and Wales, year ending March 2022

Figure 6: A higher percentage of adults with a disability experienced domestic abuse than those without

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 years and over, by disability, England and Wales, year ending March 2022



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

Notes:

1. The definition of disability used is consistent with the core definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010. A person is considered to have a disability if they have a long-standing illness, disability or impairment, which causes difficulty with day-to-day activities.
2. Data for the year ending March 2022 are not National Statistics. They are based on six months of data collection from the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales between October 2021 and March 2022. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period and lower response rates on the quality of the estimates.

7 . Ethnicity

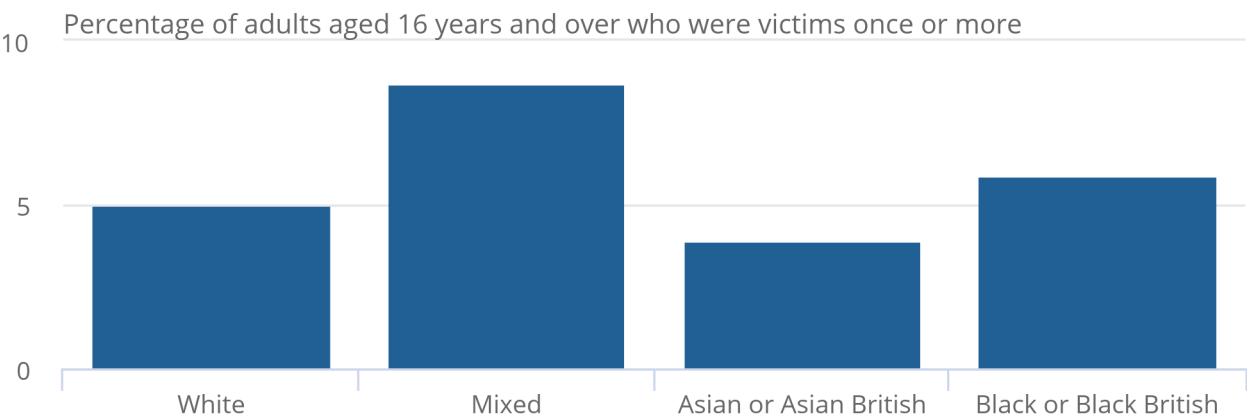
For the year ending March 2022, differences between any domestic abuse estimates across different ethnic groups from the Crime Survey for England and Wales were found not to be significant (Figure 7).

Figure 7: There were no significant differences between ethnic groups in the year ending March 2022

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 years and over, by ethnicity, England and Wales, year ending March 2022

Figure 7: There were no significant differences between ethnic groups in the year ending March 2022

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 years and over, by ethnicity, England and Wales, year ending March 2022



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

Notes:

1. Estimates for "Other ethnic group" are unavailable because of disclosure constraints.
2. Data for the year ending March 2022 are not National Statistics. They are based on six months of data collection from the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales between October 2021 and March 2022. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period and lower response rates on the quality of the estimates.

8 . Marital status

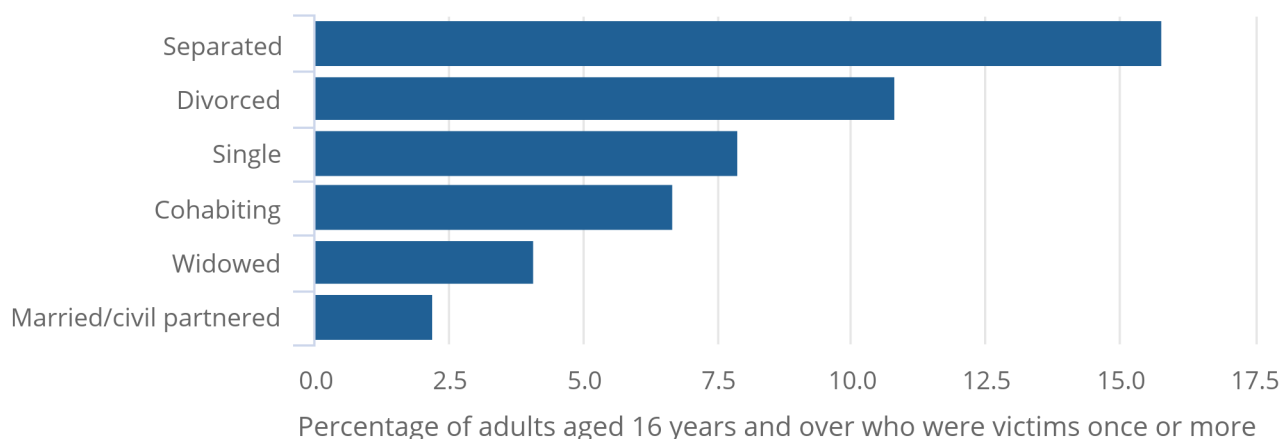
For the year ending March 2022, the Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that a significantly larger proportion of adults who were separated experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those who were married or civil partnered, cohabiting, or widowed (Figure 8). However, marital status may have changed as a result of the abuse experienced.

Figure 8: A larger proportion of separated adults experienced domestic abuse than adults with other marital statuses

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 years and over, by marital status, England and Wales, year ending March 2022

Figure 8: A larger proportion of separated adults experienced domestic abuse than adults with other marital statuses

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 years and over, by marital status, England and Wales, year ending March 2022



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

Notes:

1. Marital status may have changed as a result of the abuse.
2. Data for the year ending March 2022 are not National Statistics. They are based on six months of data collection from the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales between October 2021 and March 2022. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period and lower response rates on the quality of the estimates.

9 . Household structure

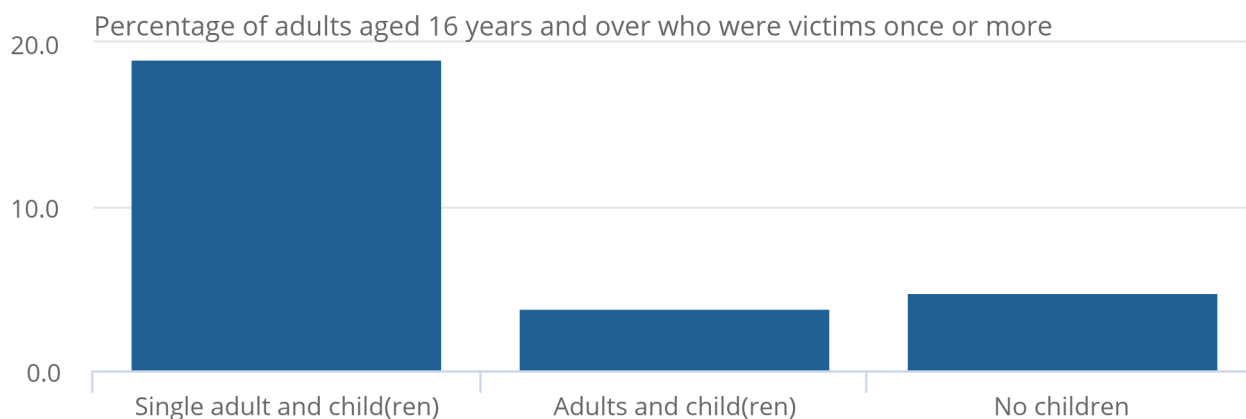
Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates for the year ending March 2022 showed that the percentage of adults living in single-parent households who had experienced domestic abuse in the last year was higher than those living in no-children households or households with other adults and children (Figure 9). However, household structure may have changed as a result of the abuse experienced.

Figure 9: A larger percentage of adults living in a single-parent household experienced domestic abuse

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 years and over by household structure, England and Wales, year ending March 2022

Figure 9: A larger percentage of adults living in a single-parent household experienced domestic abuse

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 years and over by household structure, England and Wales, year ending March 2022



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

Notes:

1. Household structure may have changed as a result of the abuse.
2. Data for the year ending March 2022 are not National Statistics. They are based on six months of data collection from the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales between October 2021 and March 2022. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period and lower response rates on the quality of the estimates.

10 . Area

English region estimates of any domestic abuse from the Crime Survey for England and Wales for the year ending March 2022 mirrored national trends with a higher percentage of women being victims of domestic abuse in the last year compared with men. However, significant differences were only seen in the North East, North West and West Midlands. This gap was largest for West Midlands, where 10.3% of women were victims of domestic abuse in the last year, compared with 2.3% of men (Figure 10).

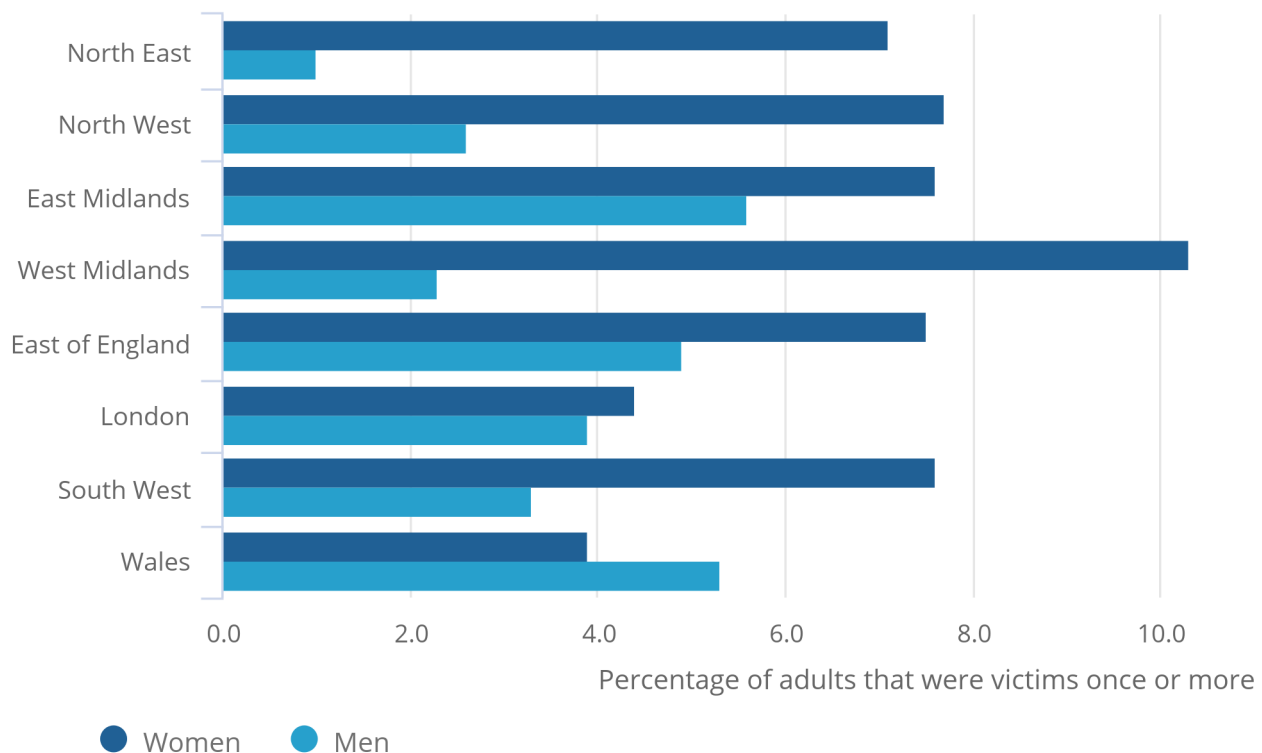
Differences between women and men in Wales were found not to be significant. Higher prevalence rates for men compared with women are likely to be the result of a small sample size because estimates are based on six months of interviews. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact on the quality of the estimates from the smaller sample.

Figure 10: The difference between female and male victims of any domestic abuse was largest in the West Midlands

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 years and over, by sex, English regions and Wales, year ending March 2022

Figure 10: The difference between female and male victims of any domestic abuse was largest in the West Midlands

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 years and over, by sex, English regions and Wales, year ending March 2022



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

Notes:

1. The English regions "South East" and "Yorkshire and The Humber" have been removed because of disclosure constraints.
2. Area of residence may have changed as a result of the abuse.
3. Data for the year ending March 2022 are not National Statistics. They are based on six months of data collection from the face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales between October 2021 and March 2022. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period and lower response rates on the quality of the estimates.

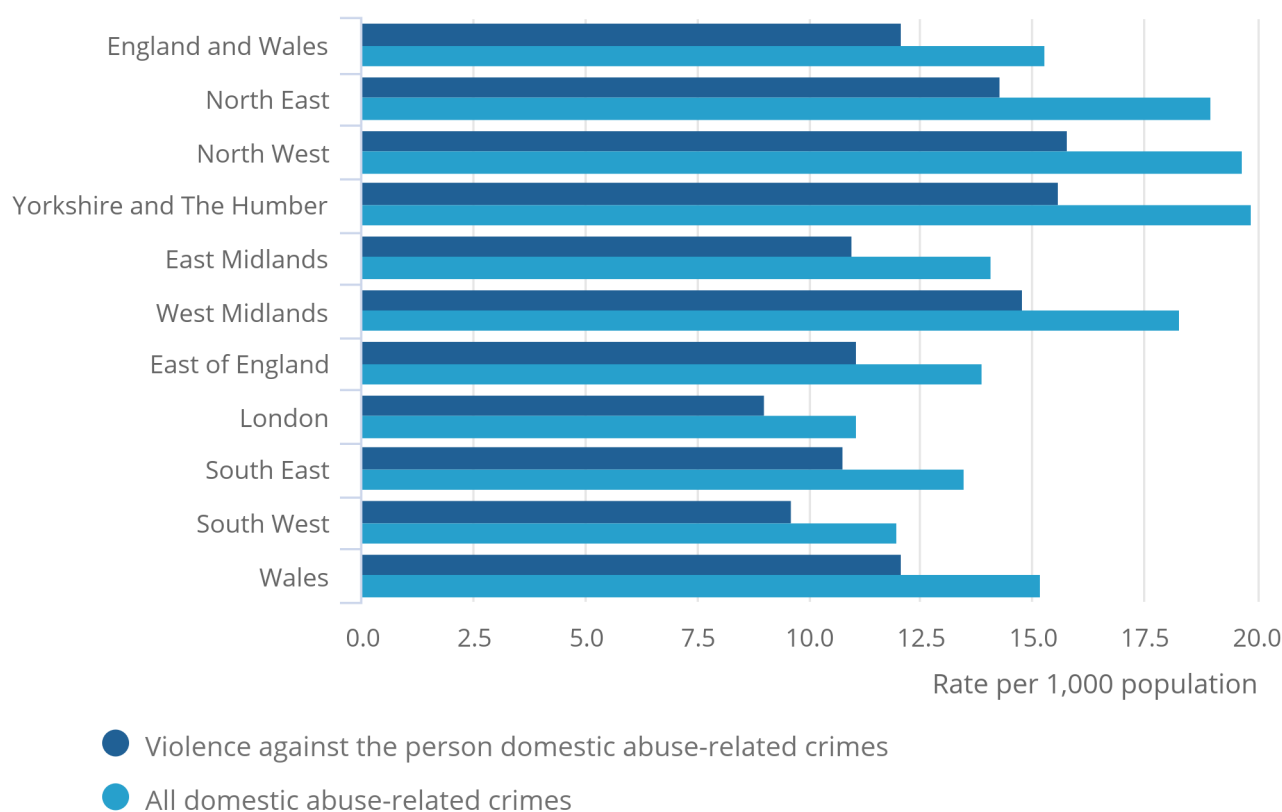
In the year ending March 2022, the highest rate of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police was in Yorkshire and The Humber (19.9 per 1,000 population, Figure 11). The lowest rate remained in London (11.1 per 1,000 population). Although this could reflect differences in the rates of domestic abuse across regions, it could also reflect regional differences in the reporting of domestic abuse to the police and how the police subsequently record these offences.

Figure 11: Yorkshire and The Humber had the highest recorded rates of domestic abuse-related crimes

Rate of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police, English regions and Wales, year ending March 2022

Figure 11: Yorkshire and The Humber had the highest recorded rates of domestic abuse-related crimes

Rate of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police, English regions and Wales, year ending March 2022



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. The population figures used are the 2021 census population data provided by the Office for National Statistics.
3. Numbers will be affected by the size of the resident population relative to the transient or visiting populations and may therefore over-represent the number of crimes relative to the real population of potential victims.
4. Total rate for England and Wales includes offences recorded by British Transport Police. However, no rates are given for British Transport Police as their data are not provided for specified geographical areas.

11 . 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.

Homicide Index data for the year ending March 2019 to the year ending March 2021 show that 72.1% of victims of domestic homicide were female. This contrasts with non-domestic homicides where the majority (87.6%) of victims over the same time period were male.

Of the 269 female domestic homicide victims, the suspect was male in the majority of cases (260). In the majority (77.0%) of female domestic homicides the suspect was a male partner or ex-partner, whereas in the majority (62.5%) of male domestic homicides, the suspect was a male family member.

Table 1: Number of domestic homicide victims by type of relationship and sex, by sex of victim and suspect
Combined data for year ending March 2019 to year ending March 2021, England and Wales

Suspect sex and relationship type	Female victims of domestic homicides	Male victims of domestic homicides
All females	9	33
Female partner or ex-partner	3	29
Female family member	6	4
All males	260	71
Male partner or ex-partner	207	6
Male family member	53	65

Source: Home Office – Homicide Index

Notes

1. Home Office Homicide Index combines data for a three-year period to account for the year-to-year variability in the volume of homicides.
2. As at 10 December 2021; figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available.
3. Home Office statisticians and police forces have undertaken a review of homicide data for year ending March 2019 and year ending March 2020 to update suspect data and cancelled crimes. Totals shown in this table will not match previously published figures.
4. A suspect in a homicide case is defined as either: 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 or 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.
5. Family members include parents, sons and / or daughters, siblings or other relatives.

12 . Domestic abuse in England and Wales data

[Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics](#)

Dataset | Released 25 November 2022

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

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

Dataset | Released 25 November 2022

Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales on stalking including numbers, types and victim characteristics.

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

Dataset | Released on 25 November 2022

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.

13 . Glossary

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence and can include a range of abusive behaviours. It can also be experienced as repeated patterns of abusive behaviour to maintain power and control in a relationship. The [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) defines domestic abuse as any incident or pattern of incidents between those aged 16 years 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 aged under 18 years who see, 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, and other relatives.

Homicide suspect

A suspect in a homicide case is defined as either 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, or 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.

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, or following or watching.

14 . Data sources and quality

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

Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)

For reasons outlined in Section 3, CSEW estimates for the year ending March 2022 are not badged as National Statistics and should be treated with caution.

More information about the CSEW can be found in our:

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

Work to improve the data collected to measure domestic abuse from the CSEW is ongoing. More information can be found in our [Redevelopment of domestic abuse statistics: research update November 2022 article](#).

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. 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 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 March 2019 to year ending March 2021) 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](#) article.

15 . Related links

[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.

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

Article | Released 25 November 2022

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

16 . Cite this article

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