

Article

Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system, England and Wales: November 2023

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

Contact:
Peter Jones
crimestatistics@ons.gov.uk
+44 2075 928695

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1 . Other pages in this release

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2 . Main points

- The police recorded 889,918 domestic abuse-related crimes in England and Wales (excluding Devon and Cornwall Police) in the year ending March 2023; a similar number to the previous year (889,311), following increases each year since records began.
- The police made 36.3 arrests per 100 domestic abuse-related reported crimes in the year ending March 2023; up from 29.6 in the year ending March 2022 (in the 41 police forces that supplied offence data and complete arrests data in both years).
- The number of referrals of suspects of domestic abuse-related cases from the police to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for a charging decision in England and Wales increased from 67,063 in the year ending March 2022 to 69,314 in the year ending March 2023, following consecutive decreases since the year ending March 2016.
- The CPS domestic abuse charging rate in England and Wales increased for the second year to 76.5% in the year ending March 2023 compared with 72.7% in the year ending March 2022; the highest charging rate since the year ending March 2015, when our records began.
- The number of domestic abuse-related CPS prosecutions in England and Wales decreased by 3.6% in the year ending March 2023 (51,288) from 53,207 in the year ending March 2022, continuing the downward trend since the year ending March 2017.
- The percentage of prosecutions leading to a conviction remained the same for the year ending March 2023 (76.4%) compared with the previous year.
- The number of non-molestation applications increased by 3.0% in the year ending March 2023 (30,979) from 30,088 in the year ending March 2022; the highest number of applications since our records began in the year ending March 2010.

3 . Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system data

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

Dataset | Released 24 November 2023

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 24 November 2023

An interactive tool exploring data at police force area level.

4 . Glossary

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

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, take no further action, or recommend 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.

Non-molestation order

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) publishes data on the number of domestic violence remedy applications and orders made.

The family courts can grant two types of remedy orders to prevent domestic violence:

- a non-molestation order, which can either prohibit particular behaviour or general molestation by someone who has previously been violent towards the applicant or any relevant children. Breaches of non-molestation orders are classified as a criminal offence
- an occupation order, which can define or regulate rights of occupation of the home by the parties involved

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

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 2023 article](#) and our [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system article](#).

6 . Related links

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

Article | Released 24 November 2023

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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