

Statistical bulletin

# Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2021

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

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# 1 . Other pages in this release

This release brings together data on domestic abuse from a range of different organisations. Commentary is split into a number of separate publications:

- [Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2021](#)
- [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2021](#)
- [Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system, England and Wales: November 2021](#)
- [Domestic abuse victim services, England and Wales: November 2021](#)
- [Redevelopment of domestic abuse statistics: research update November 2021](#)
- [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system](#)

This release follows on from our early analysis of [Domestic abuse during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#). It supports the [UN 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign](#) and the statistics are used to monitor progress towards the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

## 2 . Main points

- The number of police recorded domestic abuse-related crimes in England and Wales rose 6% in the year ending March 2021 to 845,734; this follows increases seen in previous years and may reflect improved recording by the police alongside increased reporting by victims.
- The police made 33 arrests per 100 domestic abuse-related crimes in the year ending March 2021; the same as in the previous year (in the 38 police forces that supplied complete data in both years).
- Referrals of suspects of domestic abuse-flagged cases from the police to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for a charging decision decreased by 3%, from 79,965 in the year ending March 2020 to 77,812 in the year ending March 2021.
- For the third successive year, the CPS [charging rate](#) for domestic abuse-related crimes in England and Wales decreased to 70% in the year ending March 2021, down from 76% in the year ending March 2018.
- Demand on domestic abuse helplines increased in the year ending March 2021 with a 22% increase in people supported by the National Domestic Abuse Helpline in England; this is not necessarily indicative of an increase in the number of victims, but perhaps an increase in the severity of abuse being experienced, and a lack of available coping mechanisms.
- The number of cases discussed per 10,000 adult females at multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) rose to 46 compared with 43 in the previous year.

### **3 . Crime Survey for England and Wales**

The face-to-face Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) was suspended on 17 March 2020 because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It was replaced with the Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW). The TCSEW was specifically designed to continue measuring crime during this period. Concerns around confidentiality and respondent safeguarding led to domestic abuse questions being excluded from the survey. As a result, domestic abuse estimates are not available for the year ending March 2021.

The Domestic abuse in England and Wales: November 2021 release only analyses data from police recorded crime, government data from the criminal justice system and data from services available to victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales. Therefore, analysis presented in this release should be treated with caution as, without the CSEW estimates, we cannot present data in its entirety. Particularly the prevalence and characteristics of victims who do not report domestic abuse or seek support.

Our latest domestic abuse estimates from the CSEW can be found in our [Domestic abuse in England and Wales: November 2020](#) release.

### **4 . Police recorded crime**

## **Domestic abuse-related crimes**

The number of domestic abuse crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales in the year ending March 2021 increased by 6%; from 798,607 in the year ending March 2020 to 845,734. This continues the trend of increases seen over previous years. Increases may, in part, be driven by general police improvements in offence-recording practices or increased willingness of victims to come forward to report domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse-related incidents cover reports where, after initial investigation, the police have concluded that no notifiable crime was committed. In the year ending March 2021, the number of domestic abuse-related incidents recorded by the police in England and Wales (613,929 incidents) increased by 6% compared with the year ending March 2020 where there were 581,649 incidents. This ended the trend of consecutive annual decreases seen in recent years.

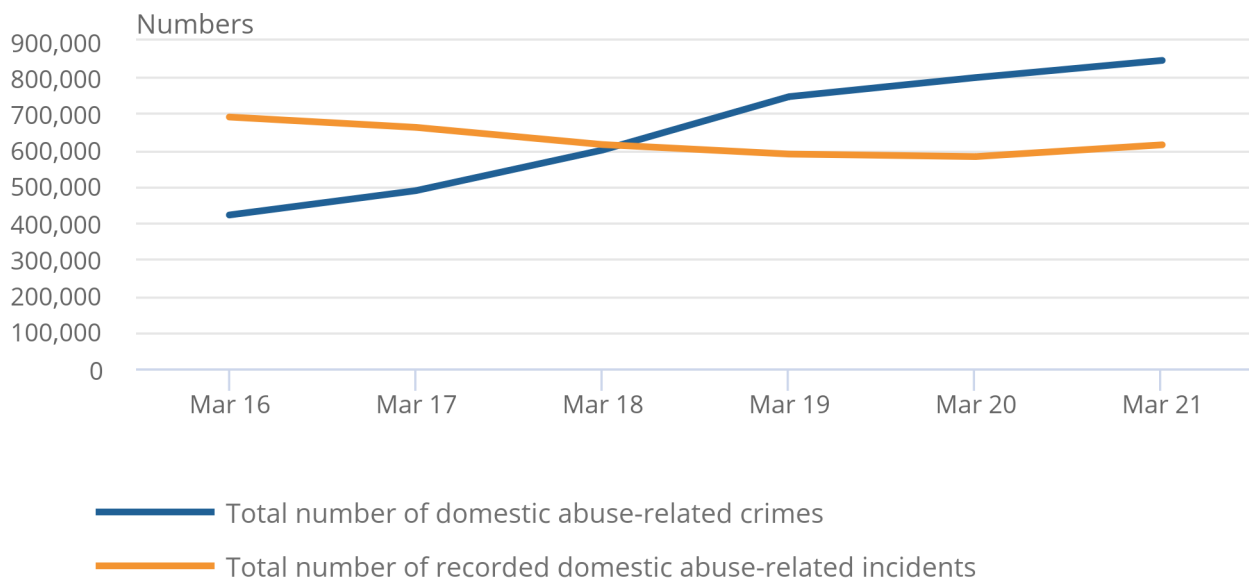
Since the year ending March 2018, the number of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales has exceeded the number of domestic abuse-related incidents (Figure 1).

## Figure 1: The number of police recorded domestic abuse-related crimes and incidents increased in the year ending March 2021

Number of domestic abuse-related crimes and incidents recorded by the police in England and Wales, year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2021

### Figure 1: The number of police recorded domestic abuse-related crimes and incidents increased in the year ending March 2021

Number of domestic abuse-related crimes and incidents recorded by the police in England and Wales, year ending March 2016 to year ending March 2021



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

#### Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Domestic abuse related crimes are defined as any incidence of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 16 years and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.
3. The number of incidents refers to how many domestic abuse-related incidents did not get recorded as a crime.

Of all crimes recorded by the police in the year ending March 2021, 18% were domestic abuse-related. This was an increase of three percentage points compared with 15% the previous year.

Broken down by month, the percentage of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by police in England and Wales was higher for each month in 2020 compared with the same months in 2018 and 2019. The largest percentages were generally seen in the months corresponding with the strictest restrictions of the first and third national lockdowns in April and May 2020 and then January and February 2021 (Figure 2).

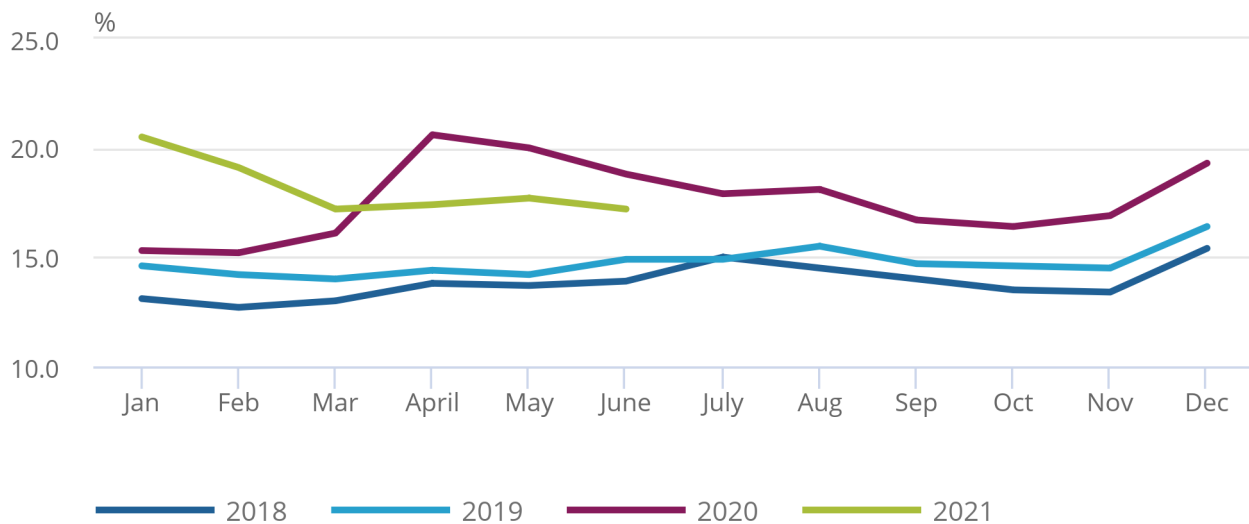
Increases in the proportion of domestic abuse-related crimes were driven by larger increases in the number of domestic abuse-related crimes compared with smaller increases seen across all other offences.

**Figure 2: The percentage of all crimes that were domestic abuse-related was higher in each month of 2020 compared with the same months in 2018 and 2019**

Proportion of offences (excluding fraud) recorded by the police in England and Wales identified as domestic abuse-related, January 2018 to June 2021

Figure 2: The percentage of all crimes that were domestic abuse-related was higher in each month of 2020 compared with the same months in 2018 and 2019

Proportion of offences (excluding fraud) recorded by the police in England and Wales identified as domestic abuse-related, January 2018 to June 2021



Source: Home Office – Police recorded crime

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. April 2021 to June 2021 data are provisional and have not been fully reconciled with police forces.

More information on trends in domestic abuse and characteristics of victims can be found in our [Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2021](#) and [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2021](#) articles.

## 5 . Criminal justice system

Data from the criminal justice system suggests outcomes of domestic abuse-related cases have generally followed patterns seen over recent years. More detail can be found in our [Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system, England and Wales: November 2021](#) article and [accompanying tables](#).

## 6 . Victim services

## Helplines

In the year ending March 2021, the number of people supported by the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run by the charity Refuge, in England increased by 22% to 49,756 compared with 40,859 in the year ending March 2020.

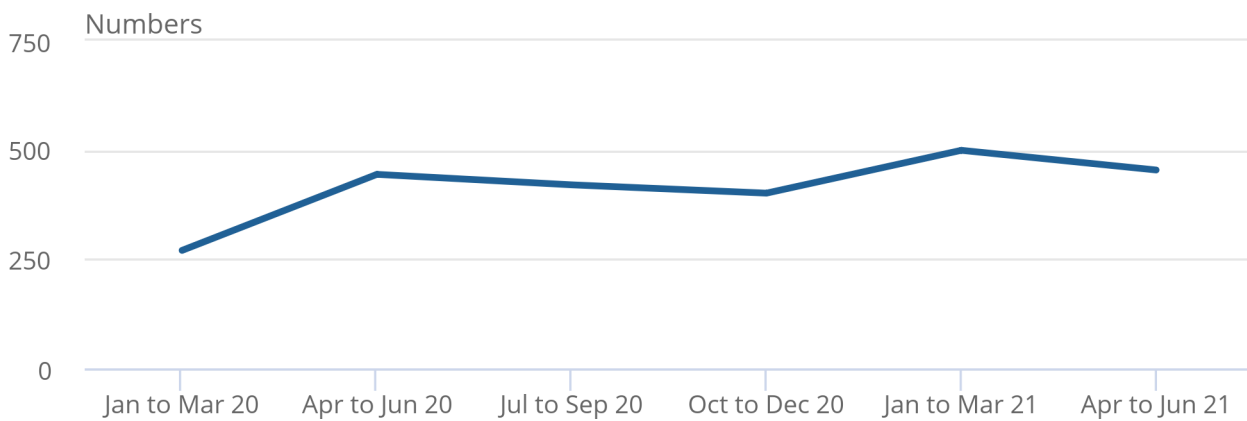
When split by quarter, from Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2020 to Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2021 (the quarters coinciding with the longest national lockdowns), we saw increases in average calls and contacts to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline (Figure 3).

### Figure 3: The average number of calls and contacts increased in the quarters coinciding with the first and third national coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdowns

Average number of calls and contacts to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, England, January 2020 to June 2021

Figure 3: The average number of calls and contacts increased in the quarters coinciding with the first and third national coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdowns

Average number of calls and contacts to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, England, January 2020 to June 2021



Source: Refuge – National Domestic Abuse Helpline

#### Notes:

1. Refuge data are not classified as official statistics.
2. The 24-hour freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline (run by Refuge) is available on 0808 2000 247, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs)

The year ending March 2021 saw increases in the number of MARACs and cases compared with the year ending March 2020 (Table 1). The number of cases discussed per 10,000 adult females in England and Wales increased to 46. This continued the trend of the last three years where the SafeLives' recommended number (40 per 10,000 adult females based on findings from the [British Crime Survey](#)), has been exceeded.

Table 1: Cases discussed at multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs), year ending March 2019 to year ending March 2021  
England and Wales

|   | Year ending 2019 | Year ending 2020 | Year ending 2021 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Number of MARACs</b>                                   | 251              | 251              | 253              |
| <b>Number of cases discussed</b>                          | 94,035           | 99,966           | 107,855          |
| <b>Recommended number of cases discussed</b>              | 93,230           | 92,880           | 93,210           |
| <b>Number of cases discussed per 10,000 adult females</b> | 40.3             | 43.0             | 46.3             |
| <b>Percentage of repeat cases</b>                         | 29.7             | 31.2             | 33.0             |

Source: SafeLives

### Notes

1. SafeLives data are not classified as official statistics.
2. MARAC data changes year on year so will not be the same as data in previous publications.

## 7 . Domestic abuse in England and Wales data

### [Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics](#)

Dataset | Released 24 November 2021

Domestic abuse numbers, prevalence, types and victim characteristics, based upon police recorded crime.

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

Dataset | Released 24 November 2021

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

### [Domestic abuse victim services](#)

Dataset | Released 24 November 2021

Data from different organisations on the availability of domestic abuse services and the characteristics of service users.

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

Dataset | Released 24 November 2021

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.

## 8 . Glossary



## Charging rate

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

## 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 or 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.

## 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.

## Multi-agency risk assessment conferences

A multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) is a meeting where information is shared on the highest-risk domestic abuse cases between representatives from a range of agencies. After sharing all relevant information about the circumstances for a particular victim, the representatives discuss options for increasing the victim's safety and turn these into a coordinated action plan.

## Police recorded crime

Police recorded crime data are supplied by the Home Office, who are responsible for the collation of recorded crime data supplied by the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales, plus the British Transport Police. The data are an important indicator of police workload but, unlike the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), do not include crimes that have not been reported to the police or incidents that the police decide not to record as crimes.

## 9 . Measuring the data

The domestic abuse data included in this release are sourced from police recorded crime, other government organisations and domestic abuse services.

The [User guide to crime statistics for England and Wales](#) provides detailed information about the crime survey and police recorded crime data.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our:

- [Domestic abuse quality and methodology information \(QMI\)](#)
- [Crime in England and Wales QMI](#)
- [How domestic abuse data are captured through the criminal justice system article](#)

## 10 . Strengths and limitations

Statistics on domestic abuse are produced separately by a number of different organisations in England and Wales. When taken in isolation, these statistics may not provide the context required to understand the national and local picture of domestic abuse.

Data presented in the Domestic abuse in England and Wales: 2021 release from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, the Home Office Homicide Index and the Ministry of Justice are classified as National Statistics. Police recorded crime and outcomes data from the Home Office are classified as official statistics. [National Statistics](#) are a subset of [official statistics](#) that have been certified by the UK Statistics Authority as compliant with its Code of Practice for Statistics. All other data included in this release are sourced from administrative datasets that do not fall within the scope of official statistics.

The way in which data on domestic abuse are collected differs between sources and organisations. The data are not directly comparable, since they are collected on different bases (for example, victims, crimes, suspects or defendants) and may not cover the same cohort because of variation in the time taken for cases to progress through the criminal justice system. As such, it is necessary to look at the data presented in its entirety as each individual stage of the system is, in part, influenced by activity at a prior stage.

Alongside this release we have published a [data tool](#) that allows users to explore domestic abuse data for police force areas in more detail and compare these with similar areas within England and Wales.

## 11 . Related links

### [The lasting impact of violence against women and girls](#)

Article | Released 24 November 2021

Violence against women and girls is prevalent across England and Wales and can lead to mental health issues, suicide attempts and homelessness.

### [Crime in England and Wales: year ending June 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 4 November 2021

Crime against households and adults using data from police recorded crime and the new Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales.

### [Sexual offences in England and Wales overview: year ending March 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 18 March 2021

Figures on sexual offences from the year ending March 2020 Crime Survey for England and Wales and crimes recorded by police.