

Compendium

# Domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking

This chapter presents findings from the year ending March 2016 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) self-completion module on intimate violence which is asked of adults aged 16 to 59. The module covers experience of emotional, financial and physical abuse by partners or family members, as well as sexual assaults and stalking by any person. This chapter also presents information on domestic abuse recorded by the police.



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# 1 . Main points

The CSEW estimates that 7.7% of women and 4.4% of men experienced any type of domestic abuse in the last year. This is equivalent to an estimated 1.3 million female victims and 716,000 male victims.

Overall, 26% of women and 14% of men had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16, equivalent to an estimated 4.3 million female victims and 2.2 million male victims.

The decline in domestic abuse for all victims between the year ending March 2005 and the year ending March 2009 CSEW surveys was statistically significant. This has been followed by a period of small, non-statistically significant, changes from year to year, but the cumulative effect of these changes in recent years has resulted in a significantly lower prevalence for the year ending March 2016 (6.1%) compared with the year ending March 2012 (7.0%), indicating a longer-term underlying downward trend.

Women were more likely to have experienced all types of intimate violence than men in the last 12 months except family abuse (non-sexual), where the difference was non-significant.

The biggest difference between women and men was for sexual assault, with women nearly 5 times as likely to have experienced this form of abuse as men (3.2% compared with 0.7%). Women also experienced significantly more intimate violence since the age of 16 than men, for all main types and sub-categories of intimate violence including family abuse (non-sexual).

There were a total of 1,031,120 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales in the year ending March 2016. Of these, 421,185 (41%) were recorded as crimes while the remaining 609,935 (59%) were incidents not subsequently recorded as a crime and remained as incidents.

## 2 . Things you need to know

This chapter includes findings from the year ending March 2016 self-completion module of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) on the extent of, and trends in, intimate violence among men and women aged 16 to 59 resident in households in England and Wales. Intimate violence is a collective term used here to refer to a number of different forms of physical and non-physical abuse consisting of partner abuse, family abuse, sexual assault and stalking. The term reflects the intimate nature either of the victim-perpetrator relationship or of the abuse itself.

While this chapter is focused on findings from the CSEW, it also includes some information from the police on domestic abuse. The Home Office is responsible for the collation of recorded crime data supplied by the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales, plus the British Transport Police<sup>1</sup>. The police supply data to the Home Office on the number of domestic abuse incidents and crimes they have dealt with in their force area<sup>2</sup>. These data have been collected based upon the governmental definition of domestic abuse<sup>3</sup>.

Headline CSEW figures for intimate violence included within this chapter have previously been published in July 2016 alongside the [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2016](#) bulletin. Some information on the prevalence of domestic abuse and domestic abuse recorded by the police included within this chapter was first published in December 2016 within the [Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2016](#) report. This report covers how domestic abuse is dealt with across the criminal justice system and in local areas, incorporating a wider range of domestic abuse data than within this publication. This publication also covers other intimate violence, namely sexual assault and stalking occurring outside of a domestic setting.

## Crime Survey for England and Wales

One of the strengths of the CSEW is that it covers many crimes that are not reported to the police. The under-reporting of crime to the police is known to be particularly acute for intimate violence offences, with many more offences committed than are reported to and recorded by the police. Estimates based on those interviewed in the Crime Survey for England and Wales during the [year ending March 2015](#) showed that around 4 in 5 victims (79%) of partner abuse<sup>4</sup> did not report the abuse to the police. The data held by the police can, therefore, only provide a partial picture of the level of intimate violence experienced in England and Wales. The CSEW provides reliable estimates of the prevalence of intimate violence using a consistent methodology that is not affected by changes in recording practices and police activity; however the CSEW cannot be used to make any inferences about demands on the police or the criminal justice system in relation to intimate violence.

Estimates of the prevalence of domestic violence (a narrower definition than domestic abuse, which excludes non-physical abuse and threats) based on face-to-face<sup>5</sup> CSEW interviews are regularly published<sup>6</sup>. However, domestic violence measured this way is prone to significant under-reporting.

This type of violence is liable to under-reporting in face-to-face interviews due to the unwillingness of some victims to disclose such sensitive incidents to an interviewer. Figures from the face-to-face CSEW interviews therefore cannot provide information on the overall level of domestic violence experienced by adults in England and Wales.

A self-completion module<sup>7</sup> on intimate violence was first included in the CSEW in 2001 and then on a continuous basis since April 2004<sup>8</sup>. The use of self-completion on tablet computers (and previously laptops) allows respondents to feel more at ease when answering questions on sensitive issues due to increased confidence in the privacy and confidentiality of the survey. 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. This is likely to be due to:

- the increased reporting of sensitive issues on account of the greater confidentiality provided by self-completion methods
- the broader definition of domestic abuse used in the self-completion module<sup>9</sup>

Unlike estimates from face-to-face interviews, the self-completion module is not affected by the current method of handling high-frequency repeat victimisation (see the Overview chapter of this publication for more information).

Comparing those who reported physical domestic abuse in the self-completion module with those who reported the similar category of domestic violence in the face-to-face interview provides evidence that respondents are much more likely to report sensitive issues in the self-completion module. Of those aged 16 to 59 who reported being victims of physical domestic abuse<sup>10</sup> in the self-completion module, only 16%<sup>11</sup> reported being a victim of domestic violence in the last 12 months in face-to-face interviews (19% for women and 11% for men). The self-completion module provides a more complete measure of intimate violence victimisation and, as there are several differences between the coverage of the self-completion and face-to-face estimates, care should be taken when making comparisons between the two.

Under-reporting of intimate violence in face-to-face interviews is also evident in the small number of sexual offences identified via this method. The figures are too unreliable to report and these data are excluded from the headline CSEW estimates. Therefore the self-completion module is the only source for estimates of these crimes.

The self-completion module is currently restricted to respondents aged 16 to 59, although the upper age limit is being reviewed. Between October 2016 and December 2016, the age limit was removed for a quarter of the sample to include all ages, with the aim to extend to the whole sample from April 2017 if this testing proved successful. It is envisaged that a decision on this will be made in March 2017.

All changes reported in this chapter are statistically significant unless stated otherwise.

## Domestic abuse recorded by the police

Domestic abuse-related offences are those where the police have identified that the crime is domestic abuse-related. As domestic abuse is not a specific criminal offence, offences that are domestic abuse-related will have been recorded under the respective offence that has been committed, for example, assault with injury. As the police recorded domestic abuse-related collection began in April 2015, it is not possible to determine how many crimes were domestic abuse-related prior to this date.

The Home Office are continuing to implement an improved data collection system called the Data Hub which streamlines the process by which forces submit data. The Home Office Data Hub replaces the old system of aggregate returns with automated capturing of record level crime data via direct extracts from forces' own crime recording systems. This allows the police to provide more detailed information to the Home Office enabling a greater range of analyses to be carried out. The migration to the Data Hub is ongoing and for forces providing data via the Data Hub, it is possible to exploit this richer data and conduct a more in-depth analysis of police recorded offences that were flagged as domestic abuse-related.

## Definitions

Intimate violence is a collective term used to refer to a number of different forms of physical and non-physical abuse consisting of partner abuse, family abuse, sexual assault and stalking. The term reflects the intimate nature either of the victim-perpetrator relationship or of the abuse itself.

The overall category of domestic abuse 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>12</sup> carried out by a partner or other family member: 2 or more incidents (causing distress, fear or alarm) of receiving obscene or threatening unwanted letters, e-mails, 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>13</sup>

Intimate violence is not limited to domestic abuse. Sexual assault and stalking can also occur outside of domestic abuse if carried out by somebody who is not a current or former partner or other family member of the victim.

The CSEW definition of domestic abuse broadly matches the [cross-government definition](#), but does not completely capture the new offence of [“coercive and controlling behaviour<sup>14</sup>”](#), which was introduced on 29 December 2015. The new law 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 is unlikely to completely match the same coverage of the new offence. New survey questions to better estimate experiences of this type of abuse are currently being developed, and will be implemented into the survey from April 2017 if testing proves successful. Figures from the current questions are presented under the category of “non-physical abuse (emotional, financial)” in the appendix tables as part of both non-sexual abuse by a partner and non-sexual abuse by a family member.

There are 2 headline measures of intimate violence in the CSEW: one relates to experiences since the age of 16 and the other is limited to those experiences in the 12 months prior to interview. As well as a self-completion module asking questions on the types of intimate violence experienced, the CSEW also includes a self-completion module which asks victims for further details about the nature of the incidents they experienced. These questions usually focus on partner abuse or sexual assault in alternate survey years. However, in the year ending March 2016 these questions were replaced with a new set of questions asking about childhood experience of abuse ([Abuse during childhood: Findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, year ending March 2016](#)). This chapter therefore only provides statistics relating to the prevalence of intimate violence, with no additional detail on the nature of the incidents experienced.

## Notes for: Things you need to know

1. For more information on how police forces submit their data to the Home Office, please refer to Section 3.1 of the [User Guide to Crime Statistics](#).
2. These figures are not National Statistics.
3. See [guidance on domestic violence and abuse](#) for the definition.
4. Partner abuse is defined as any non-physical abuse, threats, force, sexual assault or stalking where the perpetrator is a partner or ex-partner. Questions on the nature of partner abuse are only asked in alternate survey years and were not asked in the year ending March 2016; therefore it is not possible to provide this data for the year ending March 2016.
5. In a “face-to-face” interview, an interviewer reads the questions out to the respondent and records the answers given
6. See Appendix Table A3 of [quarterly crime statistics publications](#).
7. Self-completion’ means that the respondent reads the questions themselves and records their answers directly onto a laptop
8. The 2001 module differed from the one used since the year ending March 2005 and therefore the year ending March 2005 is used as a baseline for trends.
9. Mainly that the self-completion definition of domestic abuse includes emotional or financial abuse or threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to them.
10. Victims of force by a partner or family member in the last year
11. 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
12. The CSEW definition of stalking is not consistent with the legal definition due to the introduction of the offence of “coercive and controlling behaviour”, which includes stalking by a current partner.
13. 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. See the What is happening to trends in intimate violence? section of this chapter for more information.
14. This offence is now included in the [Home Office Counting Rules](#), 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.

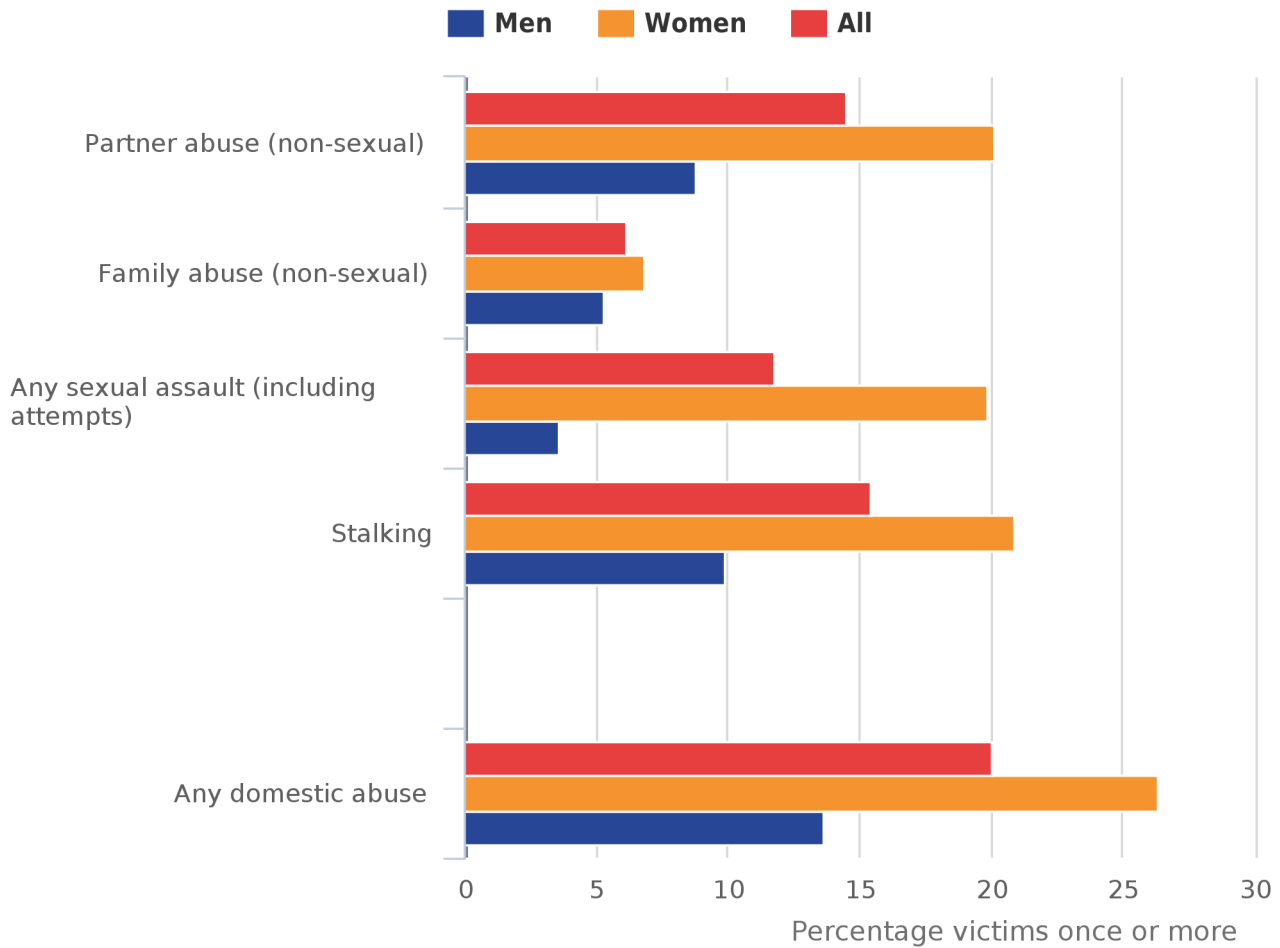
## 3 . What is the extent of intimate violence?

## Intimate violence experienced since the age of 16

Looking across all the sub-categories of intimate violence, estimates for women were statistically significantly higher than estimates for men. This pattern is broadly similar to patterns seen in previous years. The year ending March 2016 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that:

- women were around twice as likely to have experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 (26.3%) than men (13.6%) ([Appendix Table 4.01](#) and Figure 4.1)
- an estimated 4.3 million females and 2.2 million males aged 16 to 59 have been a victim of domestic abuse since the age of 16 ([Appendix Table 4.02](#))
- similar proportions of women experienced stalking (20.9%), non-sexual partner abuse (20.1%) and sexual assault (19.9%) since the age of 16
- sexual assault (including attempts) is where the largest difference between men and women is observed, with women being over 5 times as likely as men to have experienced this type of abuse since the age of 16 (19.9% of women compared to 3.6% of men, Figure 4.1); the majority of these were incidents of indecent exposure or unwanted sexual touching, which were experienced by around 5 times as many women as men (18.6% compared with 3.3%), women also experienced more incidents of rape or assault by penetration (including attempts) than men since the age of 16 (6.0% compared with 0.5%).
- for men, the most commonly experienced types of intimate violence were stalking (9.9%) and non-sexual partner abuse (8.8%), the least commonly experienced type of abuse for men was sexual assault (including attempts) (3.6%); non-sexual family abuse was the least commonly experienced type of abuse for women, but women still experienced significantly more non-sexual family abuse than men (6.8% and 5.3% respectively)

**Figure 4.1: Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence since the age of 16, by sex and type of intimate violence, year ending March 2016, Crime Survey for England and Wales**



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

**Notes:**

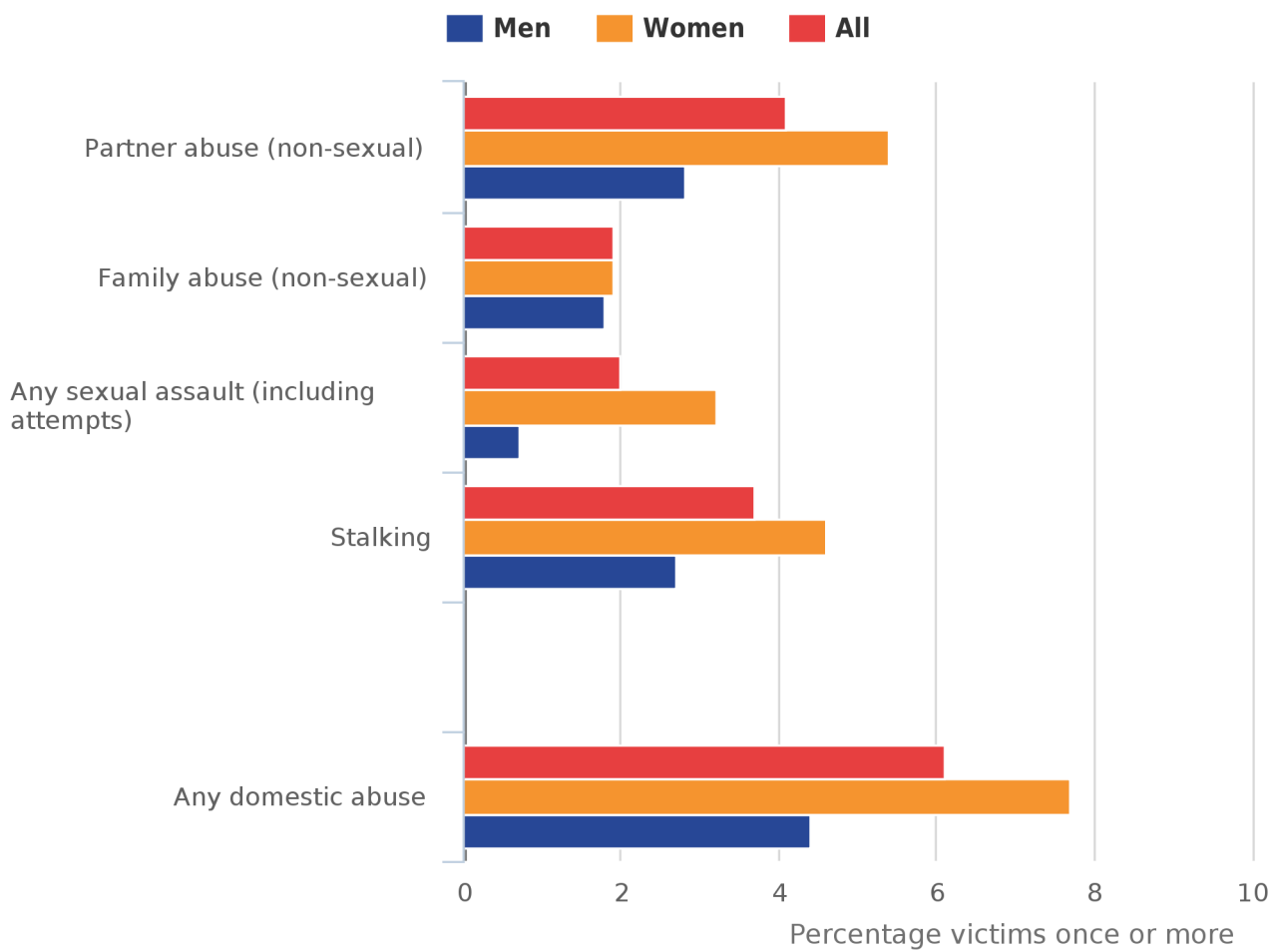
1. "Any domestic abuse" is not the sum of the other categories. Some victims of sexual assault and stalking will not be included in 'any domestic abuse' if the incidents experienced were not perpetrated by a partner /ex-partner or family member. Also, some victims may be included in multiple categories as they can experience more than one type of abuse.

### Intimate violence experienced in the last year

Respondents who had reported at least 1 incident of being a victim of intimate violence since they were 16 were asked whether they had been a victim in the last year. With the exception of family abuse, the prevalence of all other types of intimate violence experienced in the last year was statistically significantly higher for women compared with men. This pattern is broadly similar to patterns seen in previous years. The year ending March 2016 CSEW showed that ([Appendix Tables 4.01 and 4.03](#); Figure 4.2):

- 7.7% of women and 4.4% of men reported having experienced domestic abuse in the last year, which is consistent with the difference in adult lifetime prevalence<sup>1</sup> (26.3% compared with 13.6%); this is equivalent to an estimated 1,272,000 female victims and 716,000 male victims aged between 16 and 59
- non-sexual partner abuse was the most common type of intimate violence experienced in the last year (5.4% of women compared with 2.8% of men)
- 3.2% of women and 0.7% of men had experienced some form of sexual assault (including attempts) in the last year; the majority of these were incidents of indecent exposure and unwanted sexual touching, which were experienced by around four times as many women as men (2.8% compared with 0.6%)
- fewer than 0.1% of men had experienced sexual assault by rape or penetration (including attempts) compared with 0.7% of women

**Figure 4.2: Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence in the last year, by sex and type of intimate violence, year ending March 2016, Crime Survey for England and Wales**



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

**Notes:**

1. "Any domestic abuse" is not the sum of the other categories. Some victims of sexual assault and stalking will not be included in 'any domestic abuse' if the incidents experienced were not perpetrated by a partner /ex-partner or family member. Also, some victims may be included in multiple categories as they can experience more than one type of abuse.

**Notes for: What is the extent of intimate violence?**



1. Adult lifetime prevalence refers to intimate violence reported since the age of 16

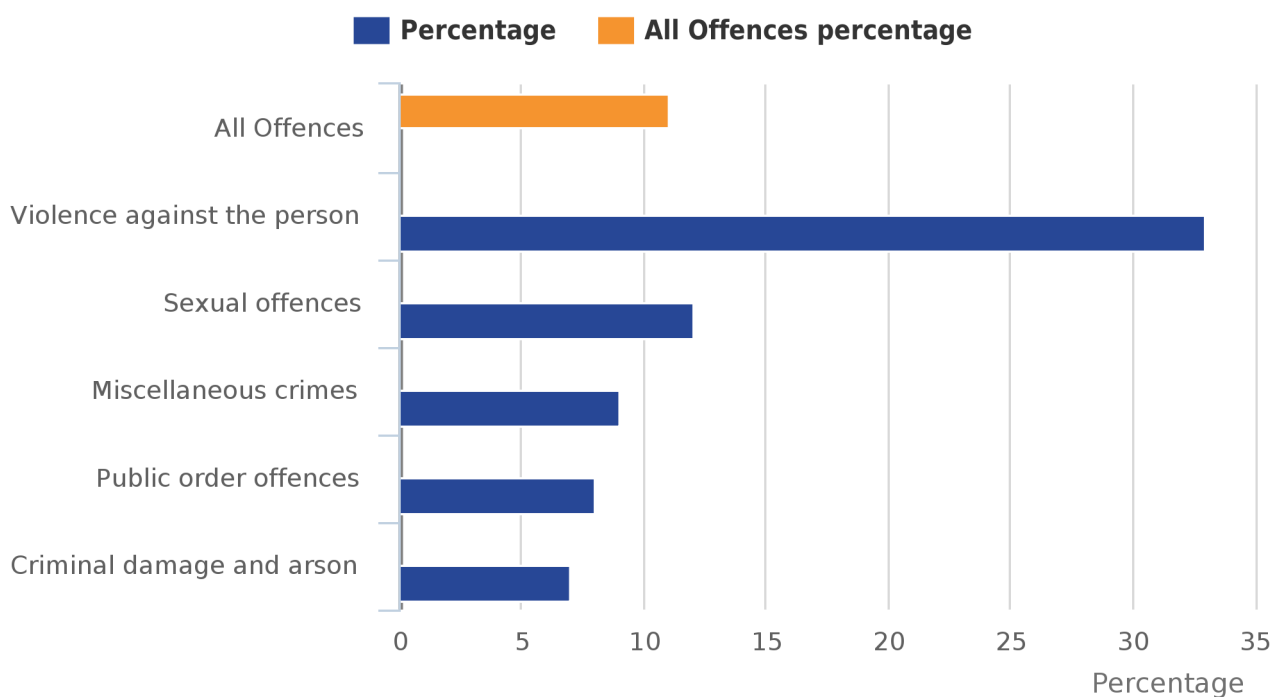
## 4 . Domestic abuse recorded by the police

There were a total of 1,031,120 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales in the year ending March 2016. Of these, 421,185 (41%) were recorded as crimes while the remaining 609,935 (59%) were incidents not subsequently recorded as a crime and remained as incidents<sup>1</sup>. These figures are not directly comparable with the estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), which will include domestic abuse that was not reported to the police. Furthermore, CSEW estimates relate to the number of victims rather than the number of incidents.

Of the 421,185 domestic abuse-related offences, 327,565 offences (78% of the total) were for violence against the person offences, 37,503 (9%) were for criminal damage and arson, 16,632 (4%) were for public order offences, 13,120 (3%) were for sexual offences and the remaining 26,365 were for various other notifiable offences (data not shown).

Overall, 11% of all offences recorded by the police were flagged as domestic abuse-related. Violence against the person offences were the most likely to be domestic abuse-related comprising a third (33%) of all such offences (Figure 4.3).

**Figure 4.3: Proportion of offences recorded by the police in England and Wales which were flagged as domestic abuse-related, selected offence groups, year ending March 2016**



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

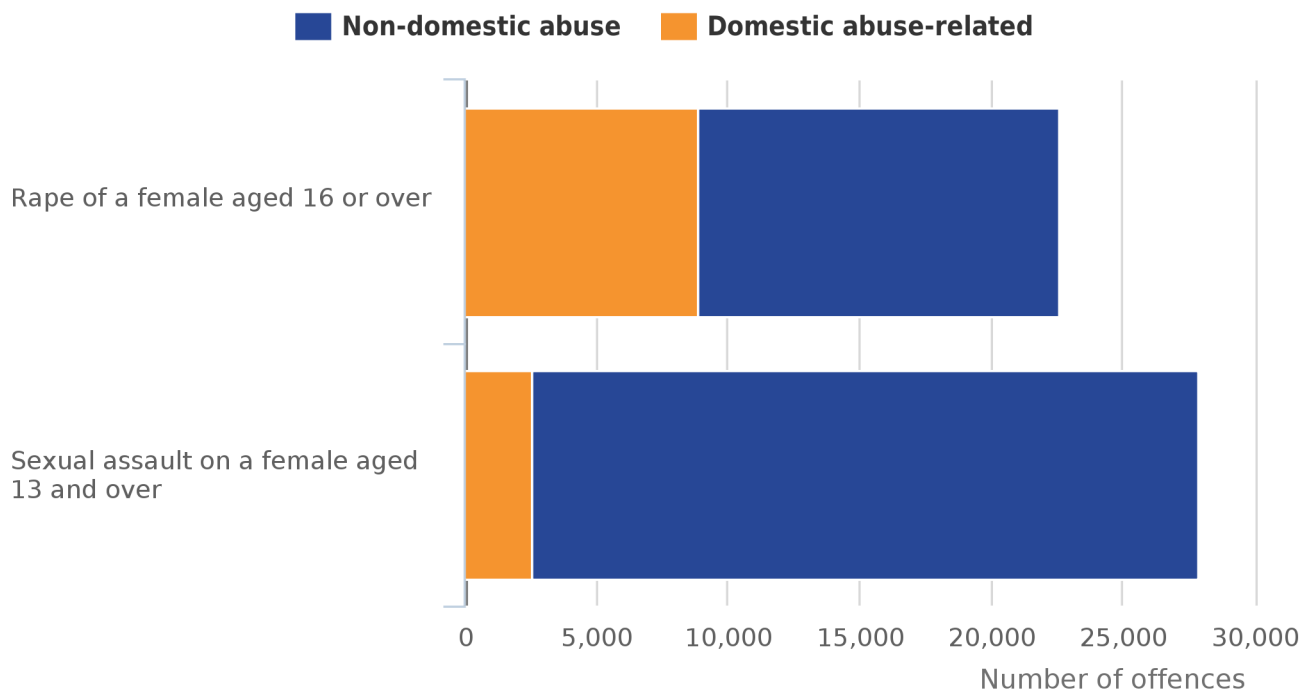
1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.

As stated previously, violence against the person offences were most likely to be domestic abuse-related. Three-quarters (75%) of violence against the person offences were for assault with and without injury; for both these offences a third were domestic abuse-related. Some of the lower volume offences within violence against the person were proportionally more likely to be domestic abuse-related: There were 8,173 offences of threats to kill that were domestic abuse-related (47% of the offences recorded); and 2,252 offences of domestic abuse related stalking (54%).

Sexual offences had the second-highest proportion of offences being domestic abuse related (after violence against the person), at 12%. The majority of victims of these sexual offences were female, with women and girls accounting for 90% of rape victims and 85% of other sexual offences.

For both rape and sexual assault, offences where the victim was female were more likely to be domestic abuse-related than where the victim was male. For example, 39% of rape of a female aged 16 or over offences were domestic abuse-related compared with 5% of rape of a male aged 16 or over offences (Figures 4.4a and 4.4b).

**Figure 4.4a: Proportion and number of rape and sexual assault offences recorded by the police in England and Wales where the victim was female, and whether they were flagged as domestic abuse-related, year ending March 2016**

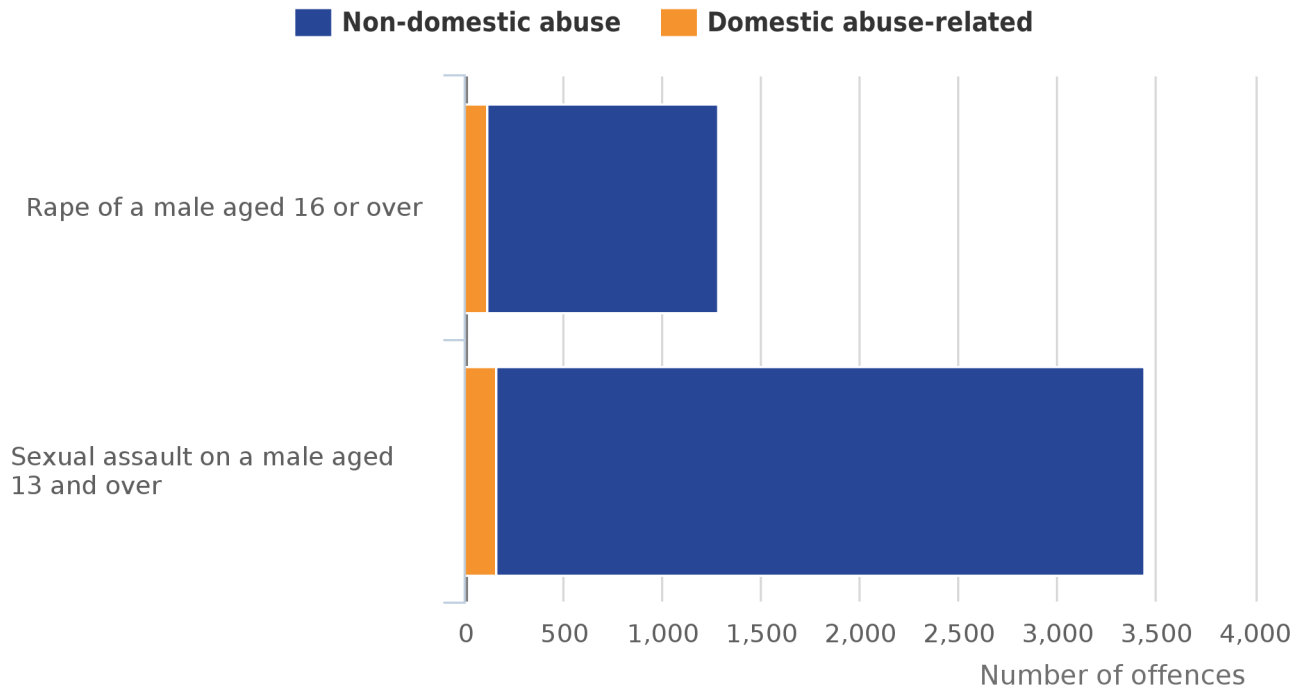


Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics

**Figure 4.4b: Proportion and number of rape and sexual assault offences recorded by the police in England and Wales where the victim was male, and whether they were flagged as domestic abuse-related, year ending March 2016**



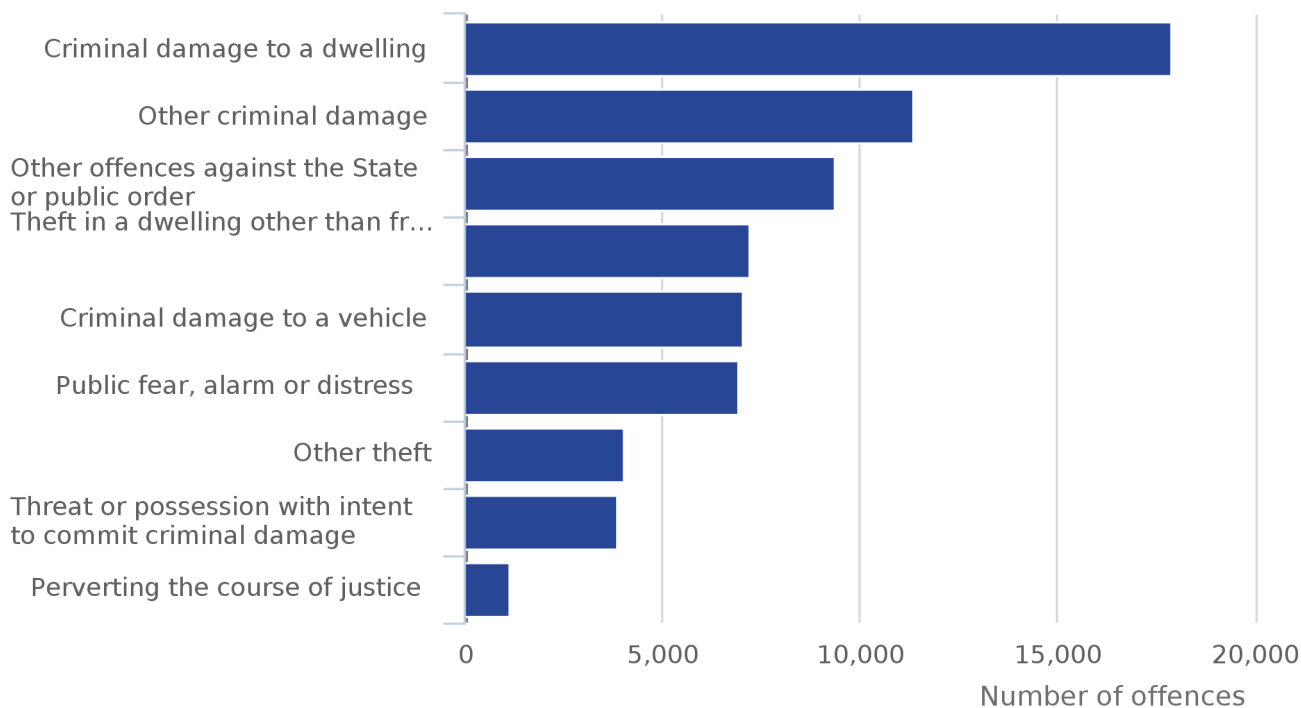
Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.

Across other offence groups, there were a number of crime types that either had a relatively high volume, or a high proportion, of offences that were domestic abuse-related (Figure 4.5). For example, there were 17,882 criminal damage to a dwelling offences which were domestic abuse related, which accounts for 14% of all criminal damage to a dwelling offences. There were fewer threat or possession with intent to commit criminal damage offences that were domestic abuse-related (3,880), but these accounted for a higher proportion of all such offences (30%).

**Figure 4.5: Number of offences recorded by the police in England and Wales which were flagged as domestic abuse-related, selected offences, year ending March 2016**



Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.

## Domestic related abuse offences by police force area

The proportion of violence against the person offences that were domestic abuse related is relatively similar between most police forces, with 42 of the 44 forces reporting between 25% and 40% ([Appendix Table 4.08a](#)).

Information is also provided on rates per population for domestic abuse offences. For England and Wales, there were 7 domestic abuse-related offences per 1,000 population recorded by the police in the year ending March 2016. Information on the rates for each police force can be found in [Appendix Table 4.08b](#).

## Further information on police recorded domestic abuse from the Home Office Data Hub

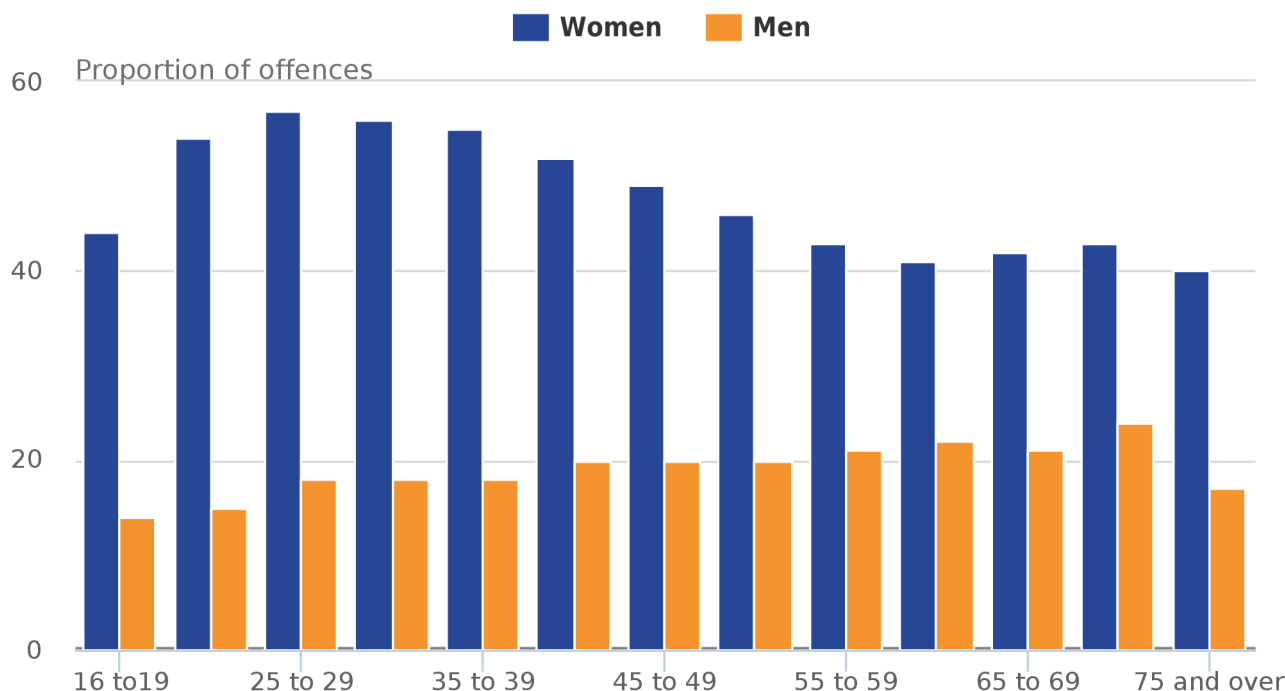
Violent and sexual offences flagged as domestic abuse-related have been analysed alongside the age and sex of victims. There were 11 forces<sup>2</sup> that supplied data of sufficient quality for these variables and are therefore included in the analysis in this section. These 11 forces account for 23% of domestic abuse crime recorded in England and Wales. The analysis may not be representative of all forces in England and Wales, however, for these 11 forces, the proportion of violence against the person offences that were flagged as domestic abuse related was 33%, the same as for all forces.

For these 11 forces, just over a half (52%) of violence against the person offences where the victim was a woman were flagged as domestic abuse-related compared with 18% of offences where the victim was a man (data not shown). This is in line with findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales self-completion module, where women were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse than men.

For women, as the age of the victim increases, the proportion of offences that were domestic abuse related tends to decline. For female victims aged 25 to 29, 57% of all police recorded violence was domestic abuse-related, compared with 40% for those aged 75 and older (Figure 4.6). It is important to note that the actual number of offences for both domestic abuse and non-domestic abuse decreases by age.

In contrast, for male victims the proportion of violent offences that were domestic abuse-related tends to increase with age, from 14% for 16 to 19 year old men to 24% for those aged 70 to 74 years old. This is partly due to the large decline in non domestic abuse-related violence by age for males, which declines at a faster rate than domestic abuse-related violence.

**Figure 4.6: Proportion of violence against the person offences recorded by the police in England and Wales which were flagged as domestic abuse-related, by age and sex of victims, year ending March 2016 (11 forces)**



Source: Home Office Data Hub, Home Office

Notes:

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. Data based on 11 forces that provided data of sufficient quality via the Home Office Data Hub

### Notes for: Domestic abuse recorded by the police

1. Domestic abuse incident data for the year ending March 2016 are not comparable with previously published incident data due to changes in the coverage of the collection.
2. The 11 forces were: Cheshire, Cleveland, Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester, Hertfordshire, Lancashire, Merseyside, Norfolk, South Wales, Staffordshire and Surrey.

## 5 . What is happening to trends in intimate violence?

From April 2013, new questions were used for the intimate violence module in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) survey. These were developed following research that identified the need for improvements to the wording of these sensitive questions, and their placement in the survey. Estimates calculated from the previous questions have been adjusted to make them as comparable as possible across the time series <sup>1</sup> ([Appendix Table 4.04 and 4.05](#)).

For the definition of intimate violence and the four main categories that make up domestic abuse see Definitions in the Things you need to know section.

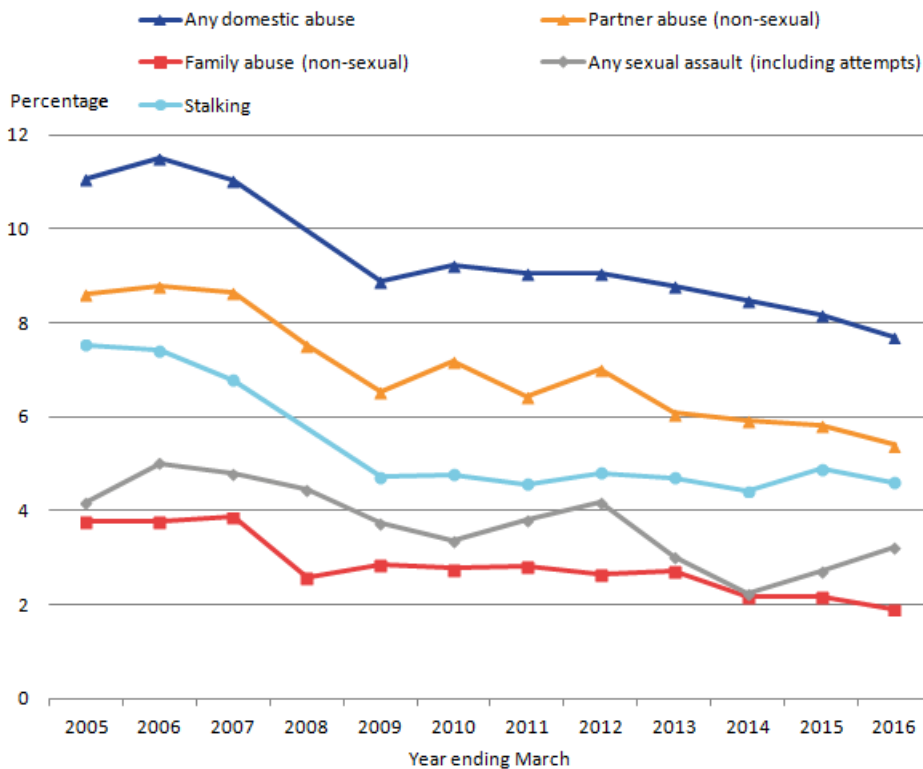
### Trends in domestic abuse

For the period covering the years ending March 2005 to March 2007, the CSEW estimated that between 8.8% and 9.0% of adults aged 16 to 59 experienced some form of domestic abuse in the previous 12 months. The level decreased significantly to 6.5% in the year ending March 2009<sup>2</sup>, since then there have been small changes in prevalence from year to year that were not statistically significant. However, the cumulative effect of these changes over a number of years has resulted in a significantly lower prevalence for the year ending March 2016 (6.1%) compared with the year ending March 2012 (7.0%), indicating a longer-term underlying downward trend.

The CSEW has shown an overall fall from around 2.7 million estimated victims of domestic abuse in the year ending March 2005 to 2.0 million victims for the year ending March 2016 ([Appendix Table 4.06](#)). The latest estimates for all headline categories of intimate violence in the last 12 months showed no statistically significant change compared with the previous year.

In the year ending March 2016, the CSEW estimated that 4.4% of men aged 16 to 59 had experienced some form of domestic abuse in the last 12 months, a significant decrease since the year ending March 2005 (Figure 4.7). Much of this fall was driven by a sharp fall for men in the prevalence of stalking between the years ending March 2007 (6.5%) and March 2009 (4.2%). The decrease in the prevalence of domestic abuse experienced by men in the last 12 months will also have been affected by the change in the questions related to stalking (See Trends in stalking below for more information).

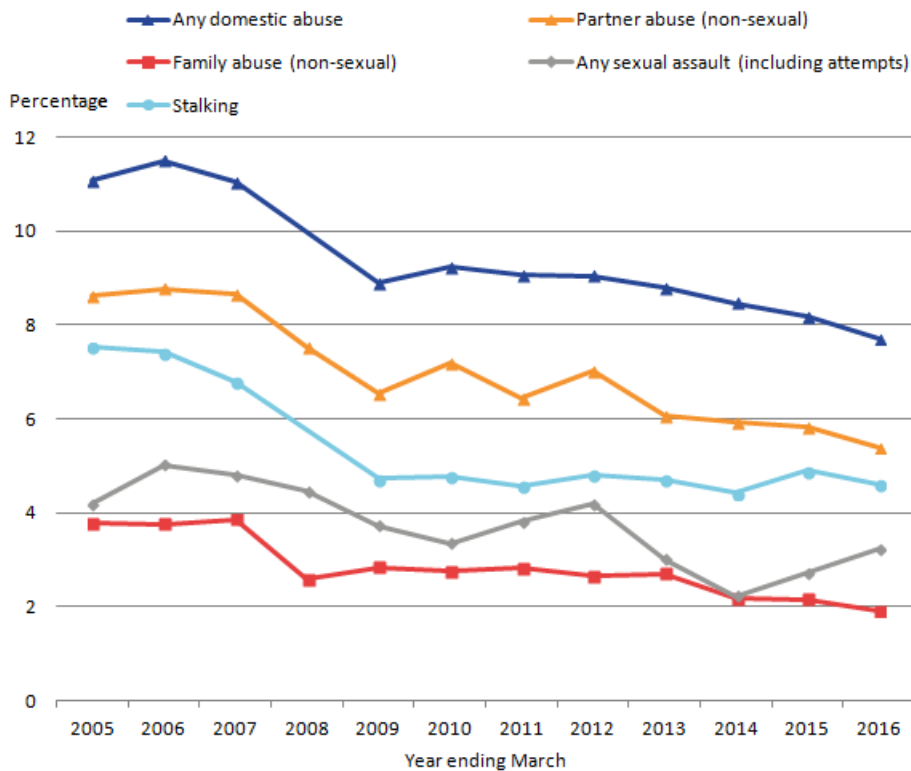
**Figure 4.7: Percentage of men aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence in the last year, by type of intimate violence, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2016 , Crime Survey for England and Wales**



In the year ending March 2016, an estimated 7.7% of women had experienced domestic abuse in the last 12 months (Figure 4.8). The latest estimates for women are the lowest figures recorded since the year ending March 2005 baseline. The difference between prevalence for men and women is also the lowest it has been since the year ending March 2005. The 3.3 percentage point difference between men and women in the year ending March 2016 compares with a peak difference of 5.1 percentage points in the year ending March 2010 and 4.6 percentage points in the year ending March 2005.

Over the last decade, changes in the prevalence of domestic abuse for women from year to year have been small and not statistically significant. However, since the year ending March 2005, the cumulative effect of these small changes has resulted in a significantly lower prevalence for the year ending March 2016 (7.7%) compared with the year ending March 2005 (11.1%).

**Figure 4.8: Percentage of women aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence in the last year, by type of intimate violence, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2016, Crime Survey for England and Wales**



## Trends in sexual assault

In the year ending March 2016, the CSEW estimated that 2.0% of adults had experienced sexual assault (including attempts) in the last 12 months. Since the year ending March 2014 there have been small, but not statistically significant, increases year on year.

0.7% of men had experienced sexual assault (including attempts) in the last 12 months. The prevalence of sexual assault experienced by men in the last 12 months has remained at 0.7% since the year ending March 2014, and there has been no significant change since the year ending March 2005 (1.0%).

3.2% of women had experienced sexual assault (including attempts) in the last 12 months. The prevalence of sexual assault experienced by women in the last 12 months has not significantly changed compared with the year ending March 2015 (2.7%), and there has also been no significant change since the year ending March 2005 (4.2%).

## Trends in stalking

Stalking has shown the largest decrease in prevalence of the different types of intimate violence, from 7.8% in the year ending March 2005 to 3.7% in the year ending March 2016. This fall has been more pronounced for men (9.2% to 2.7%) than for women (7.5% to 4.6%). Most of this change is related to stalking by someone other than a partner or family member (the prevalence of stalking by a partner and stalking by a family member has seen little change over the time series, [Appendix Table 4.05](#)) and occurred between the years ending March 2007 and March 2009. Since the year ending March 2009, stalking prevalence has fluctuated between 4.1% and 2.7% for men and between 4.9% and 4.6% for women ([Appendix Table 4.05](#)). However, when analysing trends in stalking, it is important to note that in the year ending March 2013, questions in the survey were changed to be in line with the legal definition of stalking.



Prior to the year ending March 2013, respondents were asked if they had experienced a number of different stalking behaviours. If respondents had experienced any of these behaviours at least once, they would have responded “yes” to the question and would have been counted as a victim of stalking in the CSEW estimates. However this was not consistent with the legal definition of stalking, which states these behaviours need to occur on more than one occasion to be classed as stalking. It is therefore likely that the CSEW over-estimated the prevalence of stalking prior to the year ending March 2013.

## Notes for: What is happening to trends in intimate violence?

1. More information on the change to the questions and how the adjustment has been calculated can be found in the [methodological note: split sample for intimate personal violence](#).
2. These questions were not asked in the year ending March 2008 survey, so survey estimates for the year ending March 2009 are the next available

## 6 . Characteristics associated with being a victim of intimate violence

For the definition of intimate violence and the 4 main categories that make up domestic abuse see Definitions in the Things you need to know section.

Respondents are asked their characteristics at the time of their interview; this may differ to their characteristics at the time of the abuse.

In addition to women being more likely than men to have experienced intimate violence in the last 12 months, victimisation varied by other personal characteristics ([Appendix Tables 4.10 and 4.11](#)). 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.

### Age

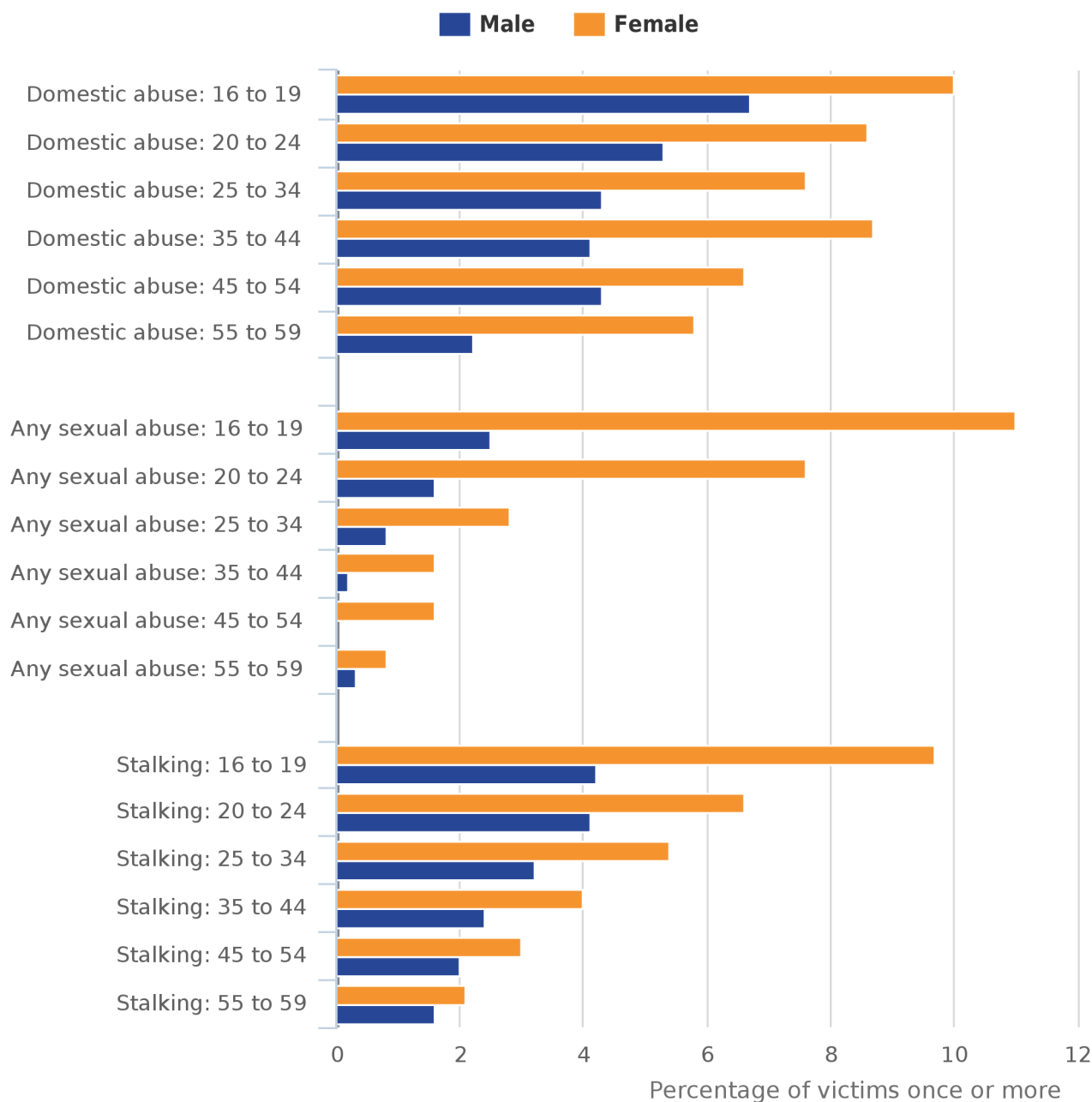
Among both men and women, the prevalence of intimate violence was highest amongst younger age groups. This is true for all domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking (Figure 4.9).

Women aged between 16 and 19 and between 20 and 24 were more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse (10.0% and 8.6% respectively) compared with those aged between 55 and 59 (5.8%). There was no statistically significant difference between other age groups. Similarly, younger men were also more likely to have experienced domestic abuse than older men. Those aged between 16 and 19 (6.7%) and between 20 and 24 (5.3%) were more likely than those aged between 55 and 59 (2.2%) to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year ([Appendix Table 4.10](#)).

In particular, young women aged 16 to 19 (11%) were much more likely to be victims of any sexual assault in the last 12 months than women aged 25 to 34 (2.8%), 35 to 44 (1.6%), 45 to 54 (1.6%) and 55 to 59 (0.8%). The only age group which was not significantly different when comparing with women aged 16 to 19 was women aged 20 to 24 (7.6%). The pattern was similar, but less pronounced for men.

Stalking showed a similar trend with women aged 16 to 19 (9.7%) and 20 to 24 (6.6%) more likely to be victims of stalking than women in older age groups. This was also the case for men aged 16 to 19 (4.2%) and 20 to 24 (4.1%), who were more likely to be a victim of this type of abuse than men in older age groups ([Appendix Table 4.10](#)).

**Figure 4.9: Percentage of men and women aged 16 to 59 who were victims of intimate violence, in the last year by age and type of intimate violence, year ending March 2016, Crime Survey for England and Wales**

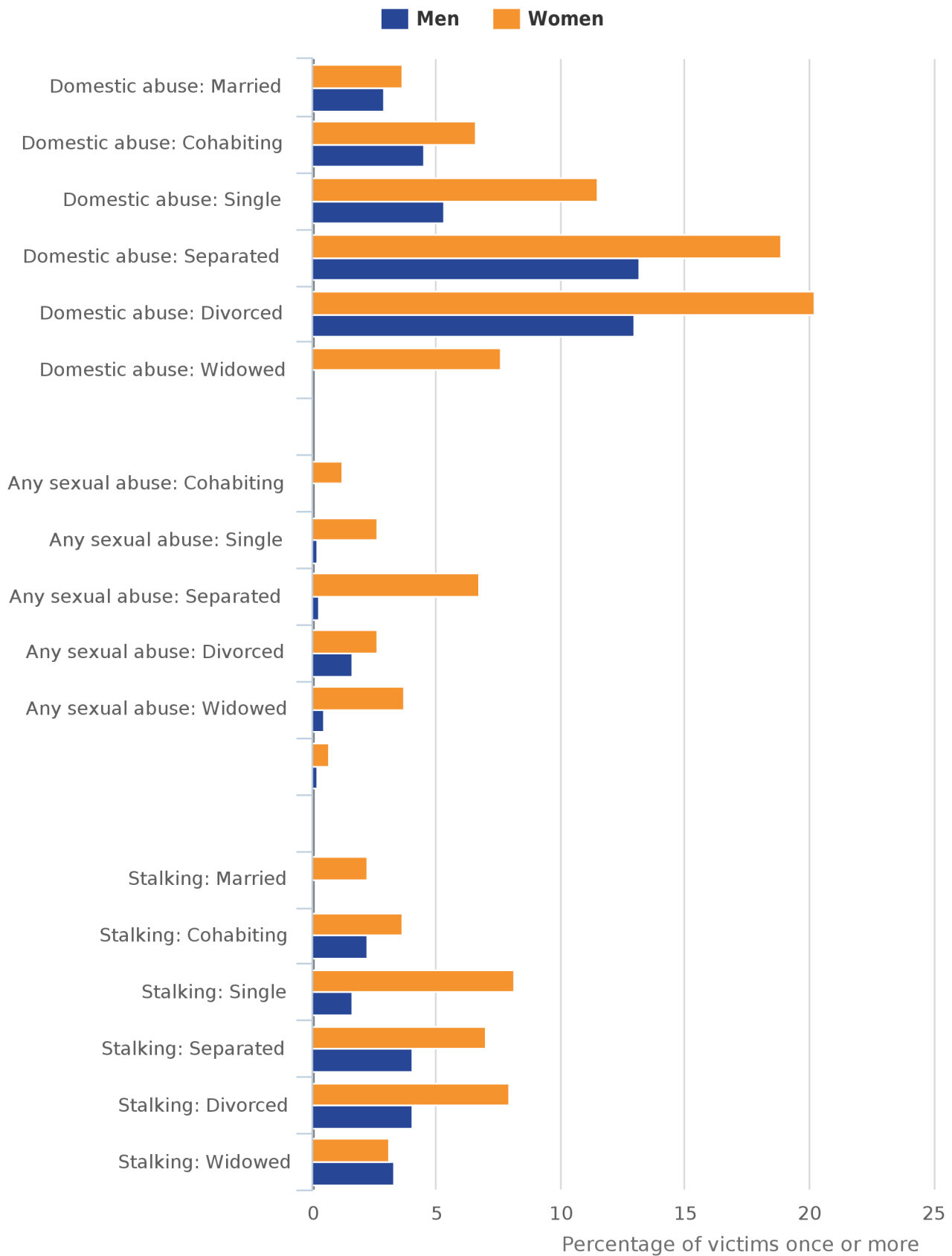


Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

## Marital status

- Adults who were separated and divorced were the most likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last 12 months. This is true for both men and women (Figure 4.10).
- Single women were more likely to be victims of sexual assault (6.7%), than those who were married or civil partnered (1.2%), cohabiting (2.6%) or divorced<sup>1</sup> (3.7%).
- Single women (8.1%) and women who were divorced (7.9%) were more likely to be victims of stalking than women who were cohabiting (3.6%) and women who were married or civil partnered (2.2%).
- Single and separated men were more likely to experience stalking (both 4%) than men with other marital statuses (Appendix Table 4.10).

**Figure 4.10: Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who were victims of intimate violence in the last year, by marital status and sex, year ending March 2016, Crime Survey for England and Wales**



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

**Notes:**

1. Data for widowed men is unavailable as the unweighted base is less than 50.

## Household structure

- Just under 1 in 4 women (23.4%) living in lone parent households were victims of domestic abuse in the last 12 months compared with 6.7% of those living in a household with no children and 6.3% of those living in a household with other adults and children.
- The pattern was similar for men, with an estimated 13.9% of men from lone parent households experiencing domestic abuse compared with 4.4% living in a household with no children and 4.1% living in a household with other adults and children.

## Long-term illness or disability

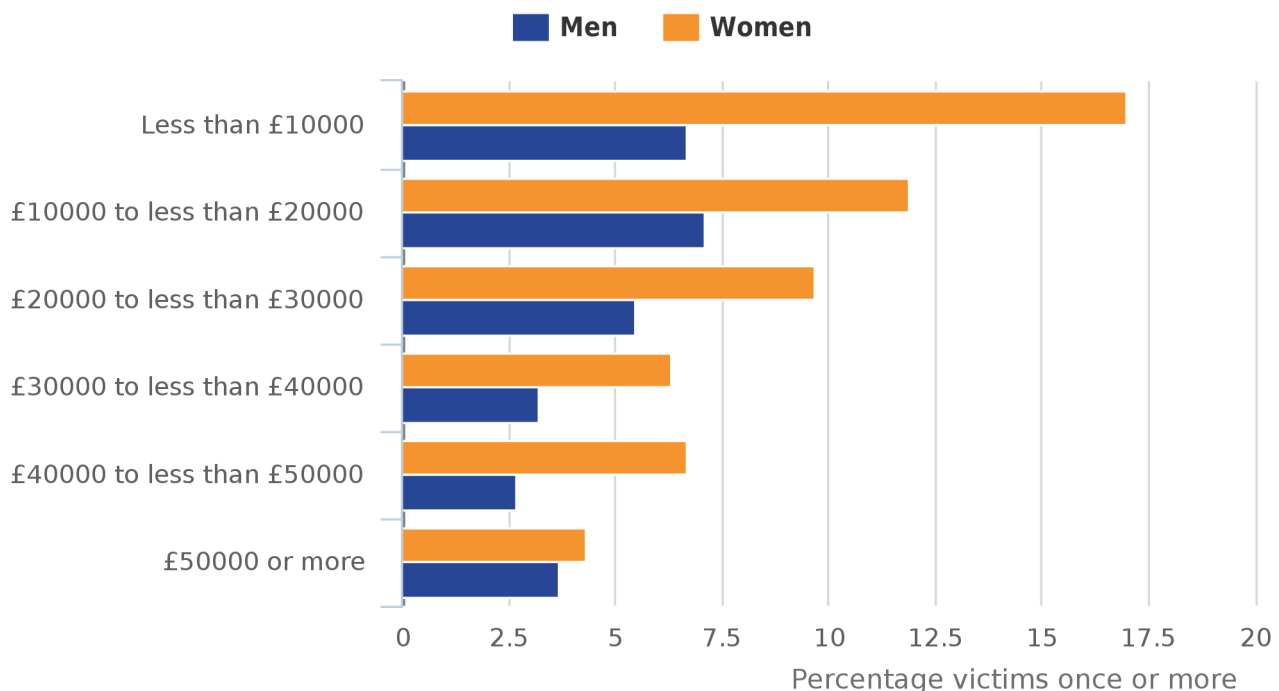
- Those with a long-term illness or disability were more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last 12 months than those without a long-term illness or disability. This was true for both men (7.3% compared with 3.9%) and women (15.7% compared with 6.2%).

## Household income

For women, the prevalence of domestic abuse in the last 12 months tends to decline as income increases (Figure 4.11). Nearly 4 times as many women in the lowest income bracket had experienced domestic abuse in the last 12 months (17.0%), compared with those in the highest household income bracket (4.3%) ([Appendix Table 4.11](#)).

This pattern is slightly different and less pronounced for men, with men in the £40,000 to £50,000 income bracket the least likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last 12 months (2.7%) and men in the £10,000 to £20,000 income bracket the most likely (7.1%).

**Figure 4.11: Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who were victims of domestic abuse in the last year by household income and sex, year ending March 2016, Crime Survey for England and Wales**



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

## Notes for: Characteristics associated with being a victim of intimate violence

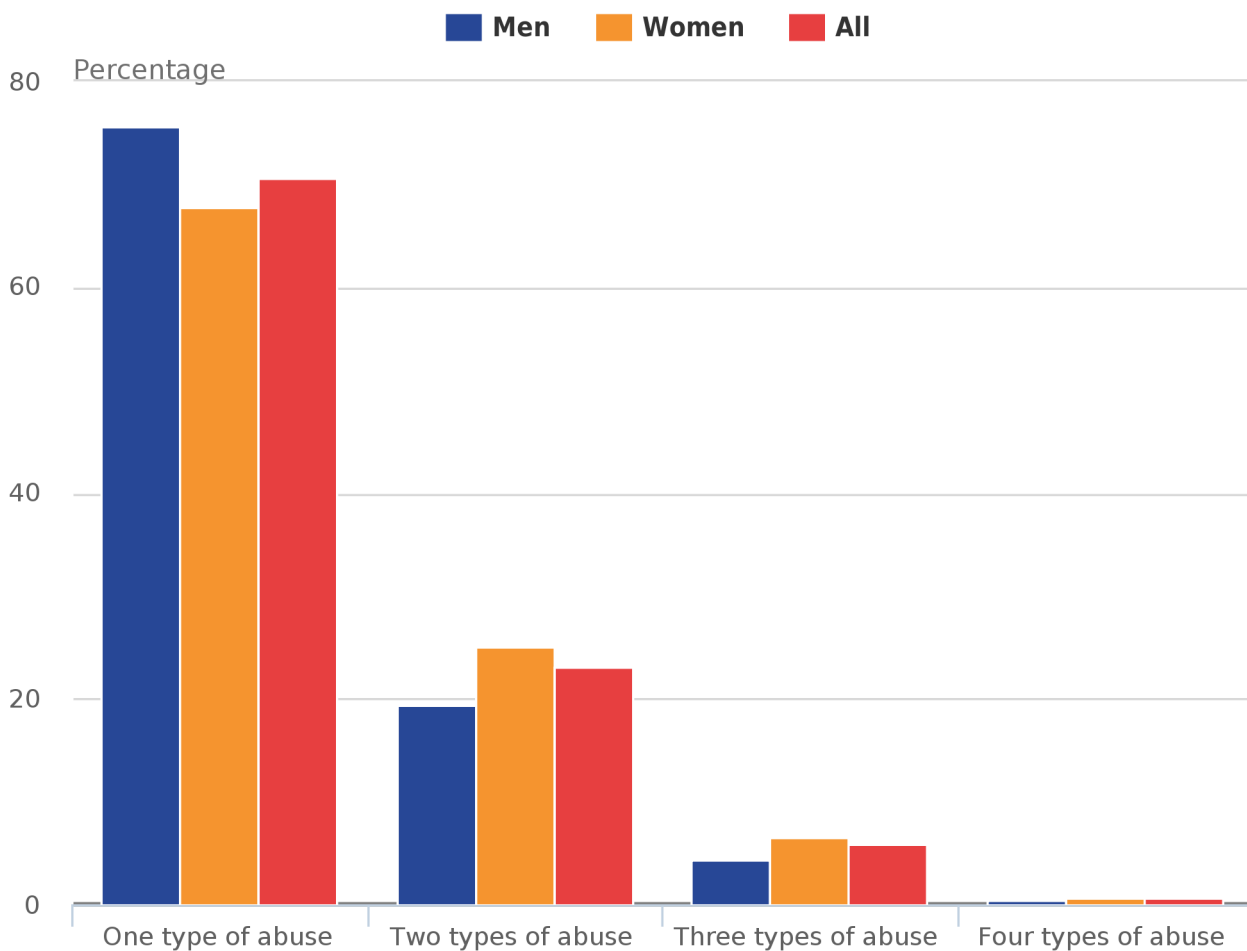
1. This category includes those who have legally dissolved partnerships.

## 7. How many types of abuse do victims suffer?

Analysis has been carried out showing the number of different types of abuse suffered by victims of domestic abuse in the last year ([Appendix Table 4.12](#)). Due to the relatively small number of victims of the different types of domestic abuse interviewed in any one year the analysis for this section has been completed on a dataset combining the 3 survey years ending March 2014 to March 2016.

The majority of domestic abuse victims (71%) suffered one type of abuse (Figure 4.12). Of those cases the most commonly experienced type of abuse was partner abuse, with 46% of all victims experiencing only this type of abuse in the last year<sup>1</sup> ([Appendix Table 4.12](#)).

**Figure 4.12: Number of types of abuse experienced by victims of any domestic abuse, adults aged 16 to 59, year ending March 2014 to year ending March 2016, Crime Survey for England and Wales**



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

### Notes:

1. This data is based on combined data from the year ending March 2014 to the year ending March 2016

Nearly 3 in 10 (29%) victims of domestic abuse suffered more than one type of abuse, with partner abuse and stalking the most commonly experienced combination (9.9% of victims of domestic abuse). Less than 1% of victims of domestic abuse suffered all 4 types of domestic abuse ([Appendix Table 4.12](#)).

### **Notes for: How many types of abuse do victims suffer?**

1. For the 3-year data set "in the last year" refers to the 12 months prior to interview and covers a 4-year recall period from April 2012 to March 2016.