

# JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2023/24

## Domestic Abuse

### Definition

- Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if— (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected, and (b) the behaviour is abusive.
- Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following— (a) physical or sexual abuse; (b) violent or threatening behaviour; (c) controlling or coercive behaviour; (d) economic abuse; (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.

*The Domestic Abuse Act (2021)*<sup>1</sup>

### Summary points

- The rate of domestic abuse related incidents and crimes per 1,000 population (aged 16 and over) was 24.4 per 1000 for Bristol in 2022/23.
- For Bristol in 2022/23, 41% of all recorded domestic abuse related crimes were a repeat incident.
- In Bristol, females over the age of 16 are 2.5 times more likely to be a victim of a domestic abuse related crime than males.
- Women in the 30-39 year old age bracket are most likely to experience a domestic abuse related crime.

### Findings

Nationally<sup>2</sup>, the number of domestic abuse crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales in the year ending March 2022 increased by 7.7%; from 845,734 in the year ending March 2020 to 910,980. This follows increases seen in previous years and may reflect increased reporting by victims.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)<sup>3</sup> estimated that 5.0% of adults (6.9% women and 3.0% men) aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2022; this equates to an estimated 2.4 million adults (1.7 million women and 699,000 men).

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.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

<sup>3</sup> Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data presented in this release, for the year ending March 2022, are not badged as [National Statistics](https://ons.gov.uk). 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.

<sup>4</sup> [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Of crimes recorded by the police<sup>5</sup>:

- 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.

In 2021/22, the rate of domestic abuse related crimes and incidents was 30.8 per 1000 for England<sup>6</sup>, a slight increase on the previous year (30.3%). Based on local police data, 9,841 domestic offences with victims over the age of 16 and domestic abuse incidents (across all ages) were recorded in Bristol in 2022/23, a decrease from 11,152 in 2021/22. The rate of domestic abuse related incidents and crimes per 1,000 population (aged 16 and over) was 24.4 per 1000, a decrease from 28.2 per 1000 in 2021/22. Of those crimes and incidents that were recorded 65.6% met the definition of a crime, down from 66.4% in 2021/22. For Bristol in 2022/23, 41% of all recorded domestic abuse related crimes with victims over the age of 16 were a repeat offence<sup>i</sup>, down from 42% in 2021/22. Repeat offences are defined as multiple offences committed against the same victim within 12 months of the latest offence.

**Equalities data:** Local data on the rate of domestic abuse related incidents and crimes <sup>ii</sup>by ward is available for 2022/23 and highlights a significant variation in rates across the city, from 5.2 per 1000 in Westbury-on-Trym & Henleaze to 65.3 per 1000 population in Hartcliffe & Withywood (Figure 1).

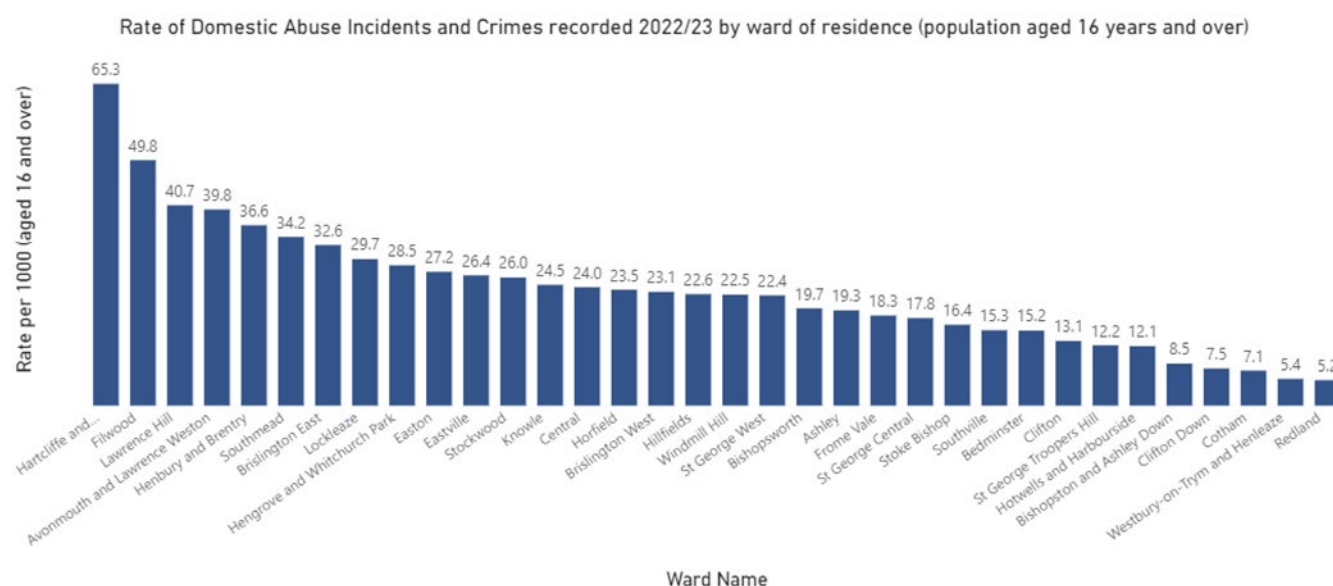


Figure 1: Rate of domestic abuse incidents and crimes 2022/23; Source: Avon & Somerset Constabulary

<sup>5</sup> [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/domesticabuse/victim-characteristics)

<sup>6</sup> Public Health Outcomes Framework 2022 [Public health profiles - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](https://phe.org.uk/public-health-profiles)

There is an association between domestic abuse and poverty. Existing analysis in the UK and internationally have consistently found vulnerability to DVA to be associated with low income, economic strain, and benefit receipt<sup>7</sup>. Hartcliffe and Withywood is one of the most socio-economically deprived wards in Bristol according to local data.<sup>8</sup>

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 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year. This is a prevalence rate of approximately 7 in 100 women and 3 in 100 men.

The CSEW showed that a higher percentage of adults with a disability experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without.

For the year ending March 2022, the CSEW showed that 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.

LGBT + survivors experience similar forms of domestic abuse as their heterosexual cisgender peers and disclose abuse from both intimate partners and family members, however experiences differ across and between groups within the LGBT+ community; LGBT+ people's experiences of abuse are frequently linked to their sexual orientation and gender identity. Current studies estimate that 60% to 80% of LGBT+ victims/survivors have never reported incidents to the police or attempted to find advice or protection from services. As well as this, black and minoritised LGBT+ people appear more likely to experience domestic abuse from family members, in addition to intimate partners.<sup>9</sup>

In Bristol, females over the age of 16 are 2.5 times more likely to be a victim of a domestic abuse related crime in Bristol than males. Women in the 30-39 year old age bracket are most likely to experience a domestic abuse related crime (at a rate of 38.9 per 1000). See Figure 2 and Figure 3 for the rate of domestic abuse related offences by gender and age.

Domestic abuse affects women from all ethnic groups, and there is no evidence to suggest that women from some ethnic or cultural communities are any more at risk than others. However, the form the abuse takes may vary; in some communities, for example, domestic abuse may be perpetrated by extended family members, or it may include forced marriage, or female genital mutilation (FGM)<sup>10</sup>. Whatever their experiences, women and men from Black, Asian or minoritised communities are likely to face additional barriers to receiving the help that they need.

<sup>7</sup> University of Bristol (2016), [Evidence and policy review: Domestic violence and poverty](#): A Research Report for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

<sup>8</sup> [http://167.71.132.100/wards/hartcliffe\\_and\\_withywood/deprivation](http://167.71.132.100/wards/hartcliffe_and_withywood/deprivation)

<sup>9</sup> [Galop\\_domestic\\_abuse.indd](#)

<sup>10</sup> Women's Aid 2021 <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/women-from-bme-communities/>

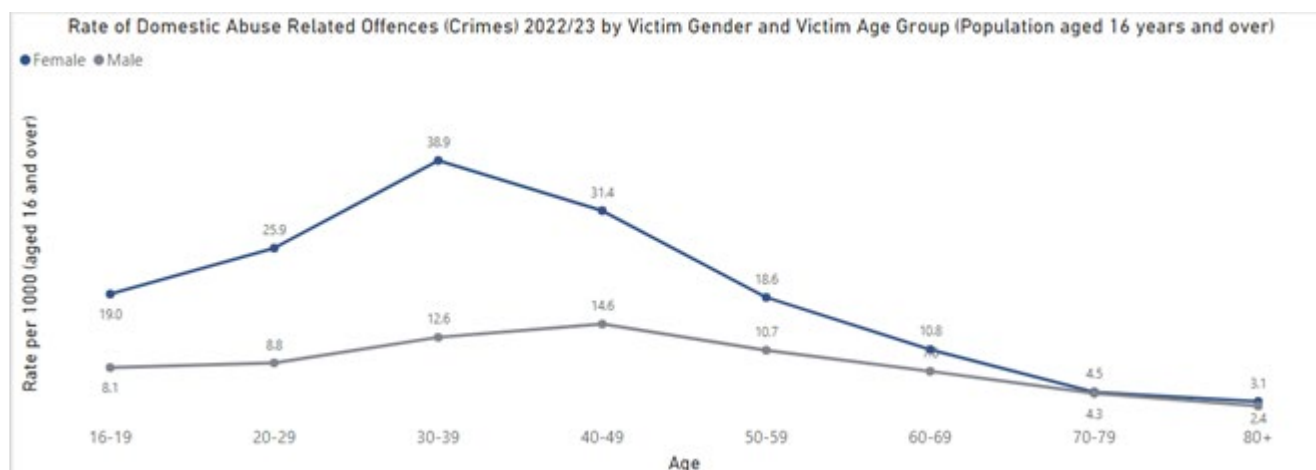


Figure 2: Rate of Domestic Abuse Related offences (crimes) 2022/23 by gender and age; Source: Avon & Somerset Constabulary, ONS Population Estimates

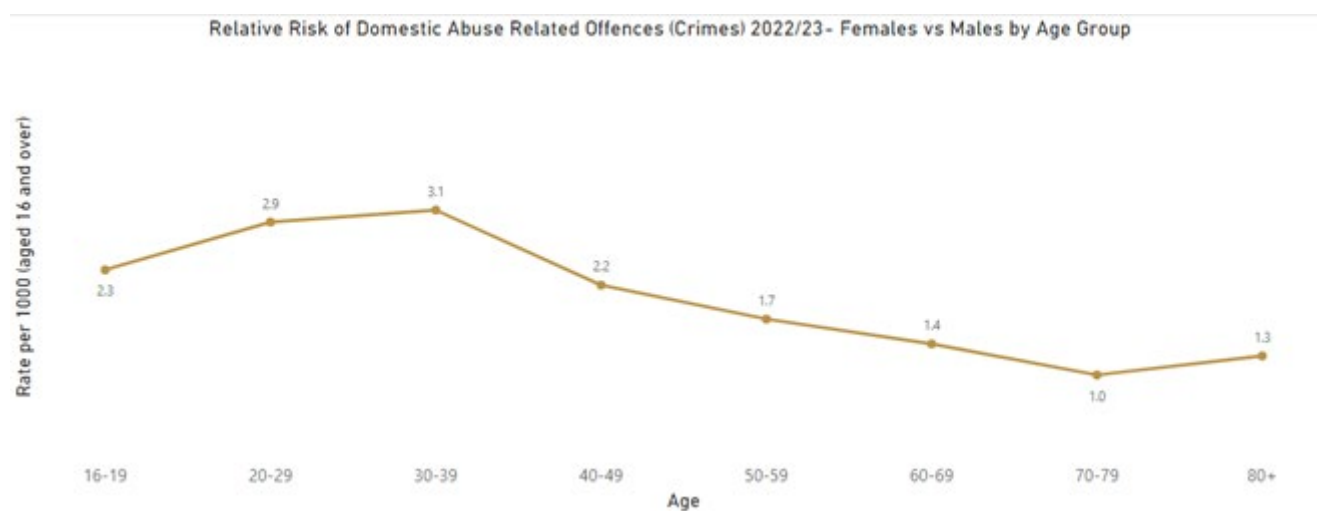


Figure 3: Relative Risk of Domestic Abuse Related Offences (Crimes) 2022/23 – Females vs Males by Age Group; Source: Avon & Somerset Constabulary, ONS Population Estimates

## Public perception of Domestic Abuse

The 2022/23 Quality of Life<sup>11</sup> survey found 6.2% of people perceive domestic abuse as a private matter, this increased to 9.8% in deprived areas (similar to last year). By sub-locality, over twice as many people in the North and West (Outer) areas of Bristol perceive domestic abuse to be a private matter than those living in the North and West (Inner) areas. Further breakdown at ward level shows that the highest percentage of people who think domestic abuse is a private matter live in Hartcliffe & Withywood (14.7%) and the lowest live in Ashley (1%) – see Figure 4.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council-and-mayor/statistics-census-information/quality-of-life-in-bristol>

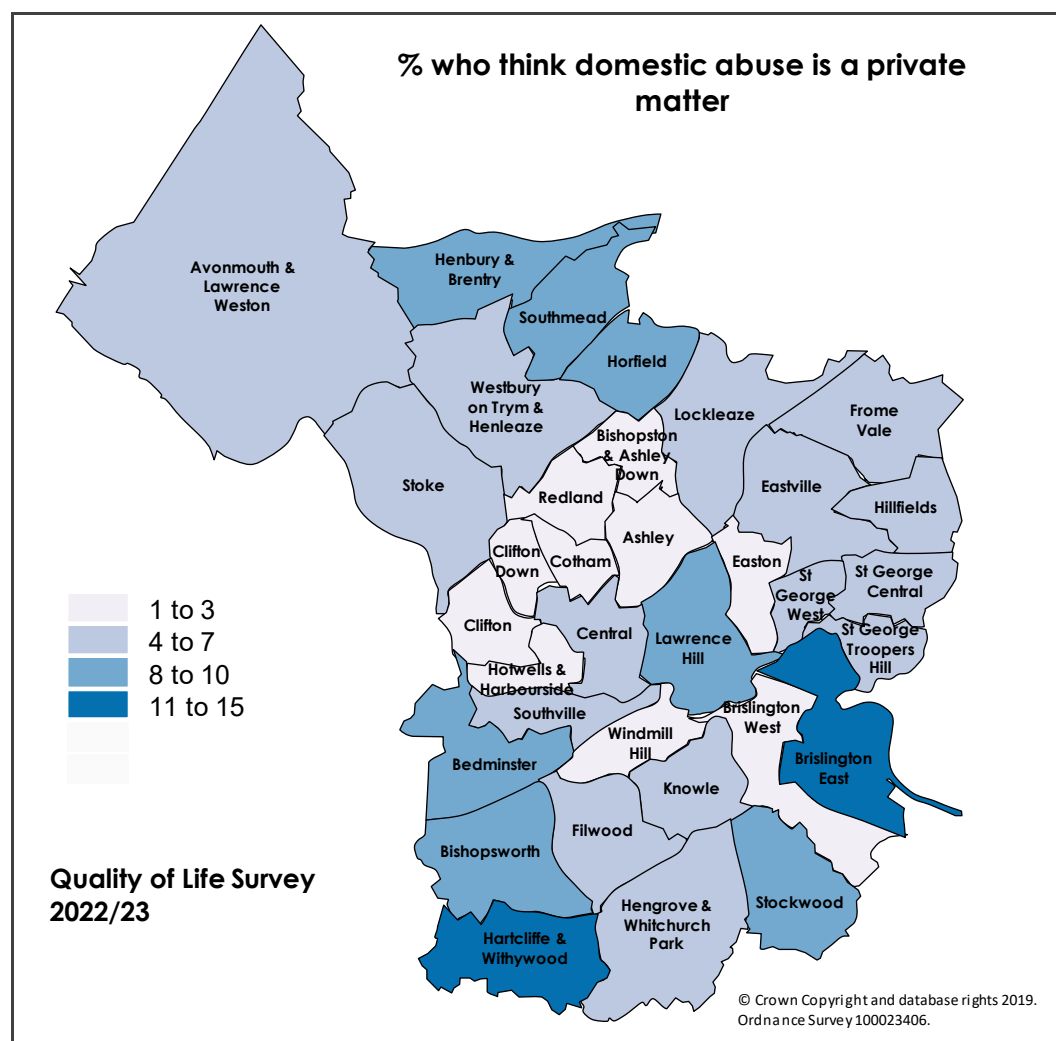


Figure 4 - % who think domestic abuse is a private matter. Source: QoL survey 2022/23.

**Equalities data:** Over twice as many people aged 65 and over (13.9%) and twice as many Black people (12.8%) perceive domestic abuse as a private matter compared to the city average (6.2%). The perception of most other equalities groups was similar to the city average with the exception of people who identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bi-sexual (LGB) where only 3.6% thought domestic abuse was a private matter.

### Impact of the Cost of Living Crisis

There is evidence to suggest that the cost-of-living crisis is having an impact on domestic abuse survivors. Research by Women's Aid (2022)<sup>12</sup> found that two thirds (66%) of survivors responding said that their abusers were now using the cost-of-living increase and concerns about financial hardship as a tool for coercive control. The cost-of-living crisis has also impacted on victims ability to leave. Almost three quarters (73%) of women who lived with and had financial links with their abuser said that the cost of living crisis had either prevented them from leaving or made it harder for them to leave.

<sup>12</sup> [The cost of living - Women's Aid \(womensaid.org.uk\)](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/cost-of-living/)

**Further data / links / consultations:**

- <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/DomesticAbuse>
- <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabusevictimcharacteristicsenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2020>
- <https://www.gov.uk/crime-justice-and-law/violence-against-women-and-girls>
- <https://www.bava.org.uk/>

**Covid-19 impact:** During the Covid pandemic and in particular during the lockdown periods, all domestic abuse services in Bristol reported a considerable increase in referrals.

**Date updated:** September 2023

**Next update due:** June 2024

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<sup>i</sup> Police recording has changed since JSNA section September 2019 so figures for repeat crimes cannot be directly compared.

<sup>ii</sup> Police recorded data. **Note;** This data is unlikely to reflect the true extent of offending and should be used with caution. It is from the Police live data system so may change. Rates are per incident not per person, so could include multiple offences against 1 victim.

\* In previous years, estimates including when a victim does not report abuse to the police or to other domestic abuse services, are produced from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). However, the face-to-face CSEW was suspended on 17 March 2020 because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and 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, CSEW estimates of domestic abuse for the year ending March 2021 are not available in this release.