

Domestic Violence and Abuse

Definition

The Home Office defines domestic violence and abuse as: “Any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship, or between family members. It can affect anybody, regardless of their gender or sexuality”. “The violence can be psychological, physical, sexual or emotional. It can include honour based violence, female genital mutilation, and forced marriage.”

Why is this important?

Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) has the highest rate of repeat victimisation out of all crimes. The impact on survivors is wide ranging, and can ultimately culminate in domestic homicide. It is the leading contributor of death in women aged 15 – 44, being responsible for more of the disease burden than many well known risk factors such as high blood pressure, smoking and obesity, (World Health Organisation, 2005),

There is a high prevalence of child abuse in families where there is domestic abuse. The impact of such abuse can have long lasting effects. 40% of children on Bristol’s Child Protection Register are living in households where there is domestic violence.

- **2** women a week are killed by a current or former partner
- **1 in 4** women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime
- **30%** of Domestic Abuse starts when a women is pregnant
- **52%** of child protection cases involve domestic abuse
- **54%** of rape cases are committed by a woman’s current or former partner
- **75%** of cases of domestic abuse result in physical injury or mental ill health
- **1 in 4** women who are the victims of domestic violence attempt suicide.
- Between **50 - 60%** of women mental health service users have experienced domestic violence, and up to **20%** will be experiencing current abuse.
- Alcohol is estimated to be a factor in **one-third** of all DVA incidents. Survivors and victims of DVA may also use alcohol as a coping strategy. DVA perpetrators have disclosed using alcohol pre-emptively to excuse their behaviour.
- Figures are based on reported cases; they will therefore be underestimates

(Department of Health, 2005)

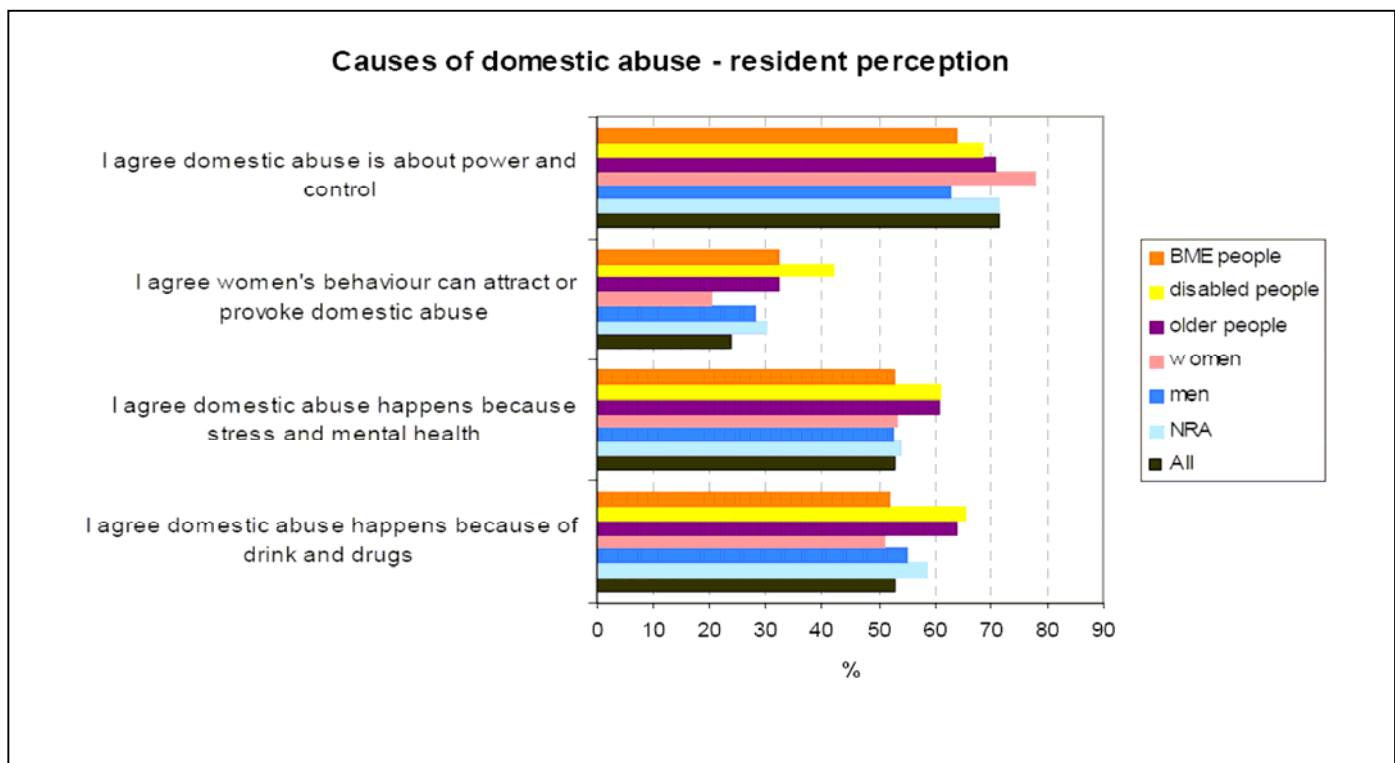
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What is the picture in Bristol?

	2007/08 % associated with DVA	2008/09 % associated with DVA
Common Assault	32.9%	36.6%
Assaults with less serious injury rate (NI 20)	30.5%	27.1%
Serious violent crime rate (NI 15)	11.5%	13.7%

Judging by the nature of these crimes it can be assumed that a large proportion of these crimes resulted in injury or emotional trauma.

Domestic abuse can occur because of psychological perceptions, a result of past family experiences and the society in which they live. These perceptions are based on beliefs about gender inequality, entitlement and ownership within relationships and a need for power and control over others. It is not directly caused by: alcohol, substance misuse, mental health, stress and financial pressures etc. It is concerning that Bristol's Quality of Life Survey (Bristol City Council, 2009) showed the following patterns in Bristol.



This provides us with a baseline from which to measure future public campaigns aimed at changing public perceptions and the tolerance of violence in relationships.

The cost of domestic violence and abuse in Bristol is estimated to be nearly £49 million per annum. This includes the cost of state responses and the loss of economic output.

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What are we doing about it?

Safer Bristol Domestic Abuse Strategy Group oversees a strategy for Bristol that aims to work together with agencies and listen to survivors/victims to:

- Raise awareness of domestic violence/abuse and the harm it causes
- Take action to challenge social acceptance and change the culture of tolerance of domestic violence/abuse
- Develop and evaluate a range of flexible and effective services to improve the safety of women, children and men who experience domestic violence/abuse
- Prevent and reduce harm, with reducing repeat victimisation a priority
- Bring more offenders to justice

Some examples of action to tackle domestic abuse:

- Marac (multi agency risk assessment conference) to action plan for the 10% most at risk families
- Citywide and local support agencies
- Targeted work with specific communities
- Safe houses
- Freedom programme for victims and survivors
- Multi agency training
- Alcohol and drugs services and DVA training and network
- IRIS research project in primary care
- New perpetrators programme being established
- Campaign work to raise awareness and prevent domestic abuse occurring
- Production of children's centre toolkit, training for staff and coordination of the children centre domestic abuse champions forum
- Survivor Support training



References

- Bristol City Council (2009) Quality of Life in Bristol: Quality of Life in your Community Survey 2008. Sustainable City Group City Development: Bristol.
- Department of Health (2005) Responding to Domestic Abuse: A Handbook for Professionals.
- García-Moreno, C; Jansen, H; Ellsberg, M; Heise, L and Watts, C (2005) Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women: Initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women's responses. World Health Organisation: Switzerland.
- Walby, S. (2004) *The Cost of Domestic Violence*, London: DTI/Women and Equality Unit

National and Local Domestic Abuse help lines, support and resources

Helplines

- Bristol Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0800 6949 999
National DV Helpline (24 hour run by Women's Aid and Refuge): 0808 2000 247
- NextLink, Domestic Abuse Services: 0117 925 0680 or enquiries@nextlinkhousing.co.uk
English National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247
- Men's Domestic Violence and Enquiry line: 0808 801 0327
- Bristol Legal Advice Line (24 hour): 0117 904 5999
- Childline (24 hour): 0800 1111
- Womankind: 0845 458 2914 (for women in emotional distress)
- Respect (for perpetrators of abuse): 0845 122 8609
- Men's Advice Line: 0808 801 0327

Projects, Support and Services

- NextLink, Bristol's Domestic Abuse Support Services: www.nextlinkhousing.co.uk
- Bristol's Domestic Abuse Forum: <http://www.bdaf.org.uk/>
- Womenkind Bristol: www.womankindbristol.org.uk
- Refuge: <http://refuge.org.uk/>
- Men's Advice: www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Police

- Emergency: **999**
- Local Police Stations: **0845 4567 000**
- Domestic Abuse Investigation Teams:
 - South Bristol, Broadbury Road Police Station, Knowle, 0117 945 5407
 - North Bristol, Redland Police Station, 0117 945 4451

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