

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2024/25

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)*¹

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 (2022/23).
- Women in the 30-39 year old age bracket are most likely to experience a domestic abuse related crime (2022/23).
- Police recorded domestic abuse-related crimes were significantly higher in the North and West (Outer) and South Bristol sub-localities than the Bristol average (2023/24).

Findings

Nationally², 889,918 domestic abuse-related crimes were recorded by the police in England and Wales in the year ending March 2023 (excluding Devon and Cornwall), a similar number to the previous year but 14.4% higher than the year ending March 2020.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)³ estimated that 4.4% of adults (5.7% women and 3.2% men) aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2023; this equates to an estimated 2.2 million adults (1.4 million women and 751,000 men).

A higher proportion of people aged 16 to 19 years (8.0%) were victims of any domestic abuse in the last year compared with those aged 45 to 54 years (4.2%) and those aged 60 to 74 years (3.2%)⁴. For those aged 75 years and over, the percentage of victims was significantly lower than all other age groups (1.4%).

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

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

³ Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data presented in this release, for the year ending March 2023, are not badged as [National Statistics](https://ons.gov.uk). They are based on eight months of data collection because of an error in the survey. Caution should be taken when using these data because of the impact of the reduced data collection period on the quality of the estimates.

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

Of crimes recorded by the police⁵:

- In the year ending March 2023, the victim was female in 73.5% of domestic abuse-related crimes
- Between the year ending March 2020 and the year ending March 2022, 67.3% of victims of domestic homicide were female compared with 12.2% of victims of non-domestic homicide.

In 2022/23, the rate of domestic abuse related crimes and incidents was 30.6 per 1000 for England⁶, a slight decrease on the previous year (30.7%). Based on local police data, 9,841 domestic offences with victims over the age of 16 and domestic abuse incidents (across all ages) were recorded⁷ 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 offenceⁱ, 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 ⁱⁱby 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 & Witherwood (Figure 1).

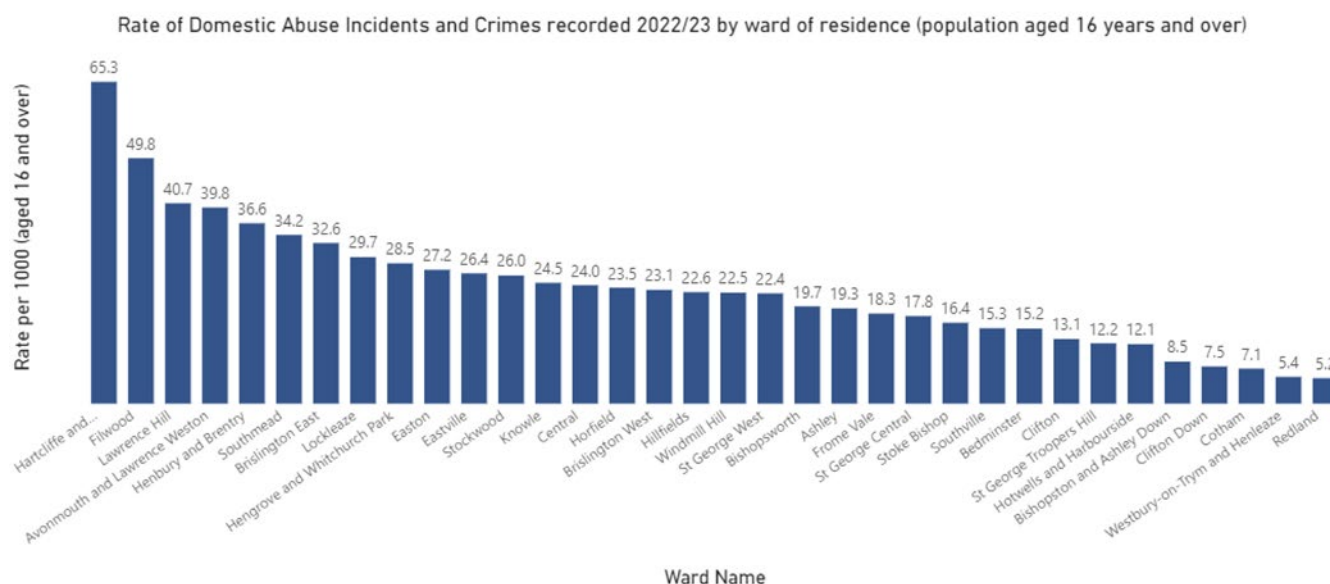


Figure 1: Rate of domestic abuse incidents and crimes 2022/23; Source: Avon & Somerset Constabulary

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

⁶ Public Health Outcomes Framework 2024 [Public health profiles - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](https://www.phe.org.uk/public-health-profiles)

⁷ 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.

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 receipt⁸. Hartcliffe and Withywood is one of the most socio-economically deprived wards in Bristol according to local data.⁹

For the year ending March 2023, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that 1.4 million women and 751,000 men aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year. This is a prevalence rate of approximately 6 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 2023, the CSEW showed that a higher proportion of adults who lived in single-parent households (18.6%) experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those living in no-children households (4.2%) or households with other adults and children (3.7%), 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.¹⁰

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)¹¹. 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.

⁸ University of Bristol (2016), [Evidence and policy review: Domestic violence and poverty](#): A Research Report for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

⁹ http://167.71.132.100/wards/hartcliffe_and_withywood/deprivation

¹⁰ [Galop_domestic_abuse.indd](#)

¹¹ Women's Aid 2021 <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/women-from-bme-communities/>

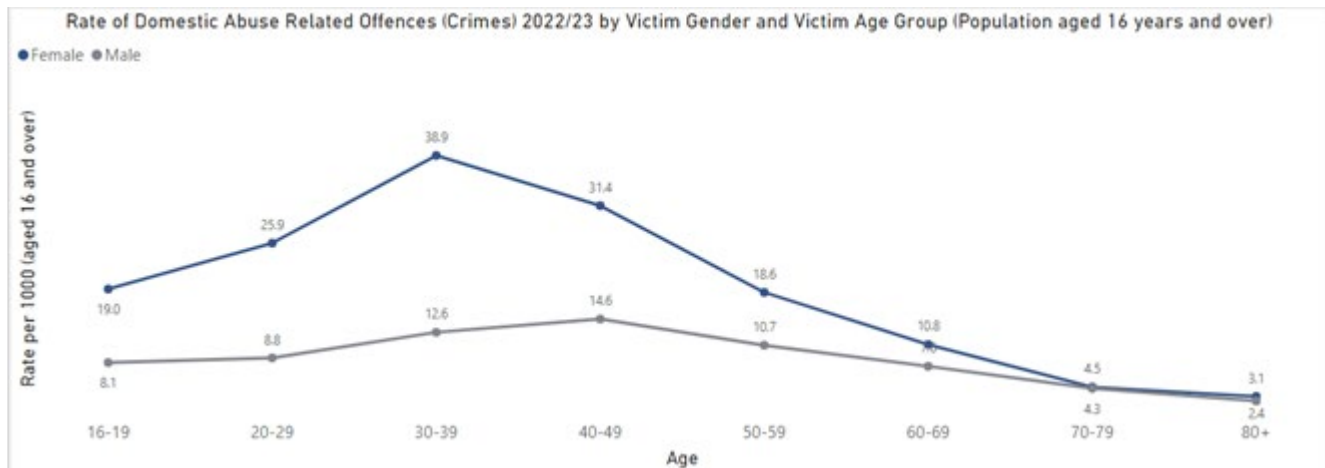


Figure 2: Rate of Domestic Abuse Related offences (crimes) 2022/23 by gender and age; Source: Avon & Somerset Constabulary, ONS Population Estimates

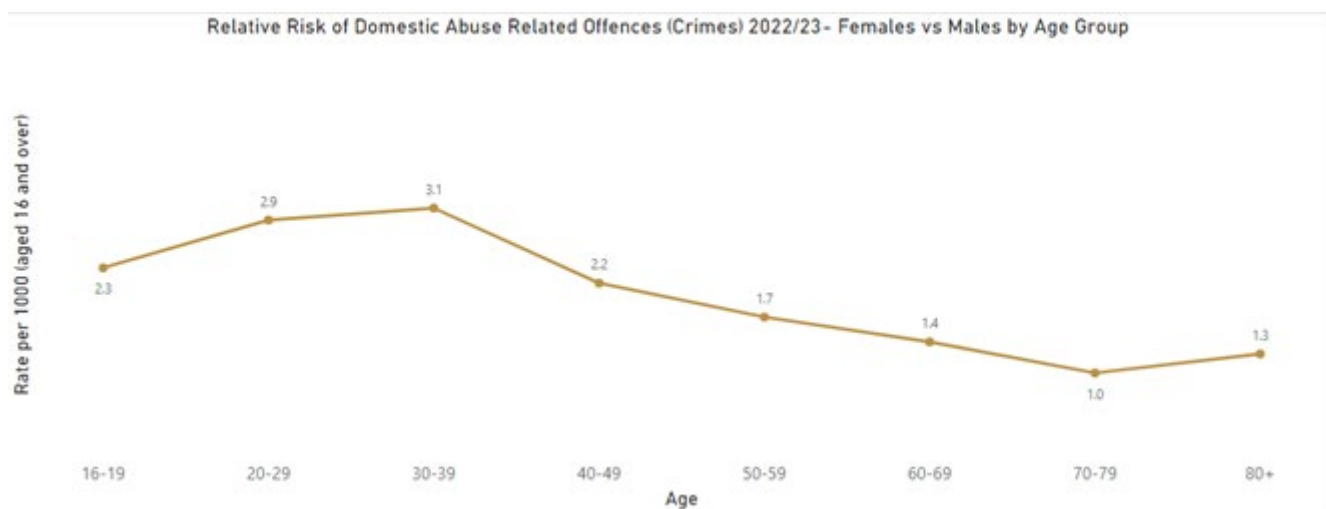


Figure 3: Relative Risk of Domestic Abuse Related Offences (Crimes) 2022/23 – Females vs Males by Age Group; Source: Avon & Somerset Constabulary, ONS Population Estimates

2023/24 data

Data for 2023/24 has not been fully accessible from the police whilst a new data sharing agreement awaits review and sign-off. However it has been possible to extract the recorded domestic abuse-related crime data which shows a Bristol rate of 13.8 recorded crimes per 1,000 people aged 18 and over. By sub-locality geography, rates are lowest in the North & West (Inner) area (5.3%), followed by East Bristol (12.4%) and Inner City (16.9%), and rising to significantly higher rates in South Bristol (17.9%) and North & West (Outer) (19.7%).

Public perception of Domestic Abuse

The 2023/24 Quality of Life¹² survey found 7.4% of people perceive domestic abuse as a private matter, this increased to 16.9% in the 10% most deprived areas. By sub-locality, 10.1% of people living in South Bristol perceive domestic abuse to be a private matter, three times

¹² <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council-and-mayor/statistics-census-information/quality-of-life-in-bristol>

higher 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 (22.5%) and the lowest live in Redland (0.9%) – see Figure 4. Hartcliffe & Withywood also had the highest percentage of people who think domestic abuse is a private matter in the previous year (14.7%), and the gap between the ward and the Bristol average is now over 15%.

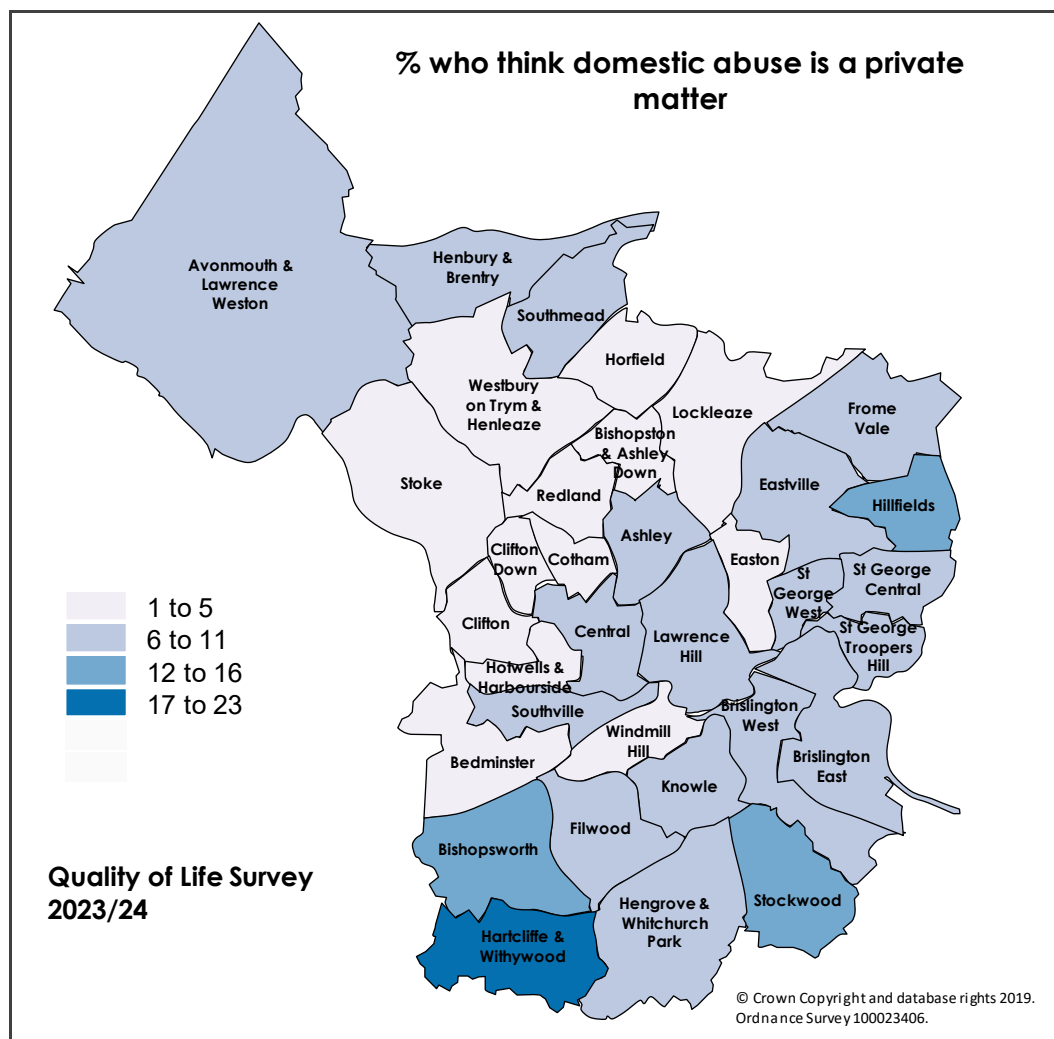


Figure 4 - % who think domestic abuse is a private matter. Source: QoL survey 2023/24.

Equalities data: Over twice as many Black people (17.8%) and nearly twice as many people aged 65 and over (14.7%) perceive domestic abuse as a private matter compared to the city average (7.4%). 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 3.5% thought domestic abuse was a private matter. People living in rented housing from the council (23.6%) and people with no qualifications (26.6%) are more likely to perceive domestic abuse as 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)¹³ 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.

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>

Date updated: September 2024

Next update due: June 2025

¹³ [The cost of living - Women's Aid \(womensaid.org.uk\)](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/the-cost-of-living/)