

Bristol City Council

Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment

July 2022



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Executive Summary

Introduction

Domestic abuse will affect 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men in their lifetime¹. It leads to, on average, two women being murdered each week in the UK and 30 men per year². It has more repeat victims than any other crime; on average there will have been 35 assaults before a victim calls the police. It is estimated that around three women a week die by suicide because of domestic abuse³.

Aim of this needs assessment

This document provides an assessment of the needs of the population of Bristol City in relation to domestic abuse. The needs assessment will help to determine the level of need for support within safe accommodation for Bristol and to inform the refreshed Bristol Domestic Abuse Strategy which will be published later in 2022.

The size of the issue

- It is estimated that each year, in the UK, an estimated 5.5% of adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse⁴. Of these, up to 100,000 victims are at risk of being murdered or seriously injured as a result of the abuse they are experiencing (SafeLives, 2015)⁵.
- In Bristol, it is estimated that more than 67,000 people have experienced domestic abuse over their lifetime. That is in excess of 19,000 individuals every year (approximately 70% female and 30% male).
- It is estimated that more than 6,000 of these are young people aged 16-17 years and around 2,500 are over 60 years.
- Furthermore an estimated 3,400 of them are from ethnic minority communities, around 2,400 are from LGB+ community and around 10,500 are likely to be disabled.

Who is at risk?

- Between April 2019 and March 2020, the Crime Survey for England and Wales shows that women aged 16 to 19 years were significantly more likely to be victims of domestic abuse than women over 25 years.
- According to an NSPCC survey, 25% of girls and 18% of boys aged 13-17 experienced some form of physical violence from an intimate partner.
- LGB+ victims of domestic abuse are more likely to be abused by multiple perpetrators (15% compared to 9% of non-LGB+ victims).
- Domestic abuse can escalate in pregnancy, putting the victim and their unborn child at risk. Around 30% of domestic abuse begins during pregnancy and 40%-60% of women experiencing abuse are abused during pregnancy.

- In 2020/21 there were over 3,400 referrals to children's services, 17% of those were domestic abuse related (568).

Impact of the pandemic

- During the pandemic, there was an increase in the severity of abuse over the pandemic with around 64 domestic homicides recorded by the police in England and Wales between January and June 2020. Almost half of those (n=30) occurred in the period April to June 2020.
- According to Women's Aid (2020)⁶ survey conducted during the pandemic, 52% felt the pandemic had had a bad effect on their mental health and that they were less able to cope with the abuse.
- Domestic abuse services were also impacted; Refuge's Helpline saw a 65% in calls and a 700% increase in visits to its website.

Challenges

- There are several domestic abuse services in Bristol, however they experience lack of specialist staff, shortage of funding and/or short term funding streams and a shortage of referrals to perpetrators services by professionals.
- The number of referrals from outside the Local Authority has increased over the past 3 years (potentially impacted by Covid-19).
- Almost half of victims and survivors of domestic abuse would not tell anyone, which highlights a challenge for Bristol in terms of increasing confidence in seeking help. Reported barriers to this include: not realising it was domestic abuse (36%); scared about what the abuser would do if they found out (30%); they felt ashamed or embarrassed (26%).

Learning

- The most important aspects of support for victims of abuse in Bristol are: confidentiality; 24 hour service; evening availability; flexible service; the choice between and male/female worker.
- The most common thing that victims and survivors want support with is mental health (62%), followed by support to keep them safe in their own home (32%). Over a quarter want support for their children's wellbeing and also legal advice and support.
- When looking for support, most would use an internet search or social media. In addition, notice boards in GP surgeries, council and police buildings and in public amenities are helpful.

Recommendations

Full recommendations can be found from page 110 of this document, but in summary, the recommendations are:

1. **Disclosing domestic abuse** – Commissioners to work with domestic abuse services to promote and raise awareness of services in a way that breaks down the barriers highlighted above. This might include case study examples of what domestic abuse may look like in terms of non-physical tactics used by perpetrators. Commissioners to consider how specialist services are supported to develop partnerships with settings such as GP practices through training, promotion and colocation.
2. **Support requirements** – Commissioners to ensure that services offer: mental health support either directly or through referral pathways; support for finance, debt and legal advice; clear communication around confidentiality.
3. **Accessing safe accommodation** – a ‘whole housing’ approach is required to support domestic abuse victims presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse and to support those who want to remain safe in their own home.
4. **Perpetrator management** – The local partnership and commissioners to: identify where adapted support, including substance use and mental health services, could achieve behaviour change in perpetrators; review accommodation pathways for perpetrators to ensure survivors are kept safe.
5. **Demand and capacity** – Commissioners to consider increasing capacity for accommodation for victims of domestic abuse, taking into account the need according to age, gender, sexual orientation, disability and ethnicity.

A: What do we know?

1. Who is at risk and why?

Domestic abuse will affect 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men in their lifetime⁷. It leads to, on average, two women being murdered each week in the UK and 30 men per year⁸. It has more repeat victims than any other crime; on average there will have been 35 assaults before a victim calls the police. It is estimated that around three women a week die by suicide because of domestic abuse⁹.

1.1 Aim and Scope of Needs Assessment

This document provides an assessment of the needs of the population of Bristol City in relation to domestic abuse. This needs assessment will cover the statutory requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021¹⁰ set out in the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)^a template. There is a specific focus on the statutory duty for Tier 1 Local Authorities which is in relation to safe accommodation needs. The needs assessment will help to determine the level of need for support within safe accommodation for Bristol. However, the scope has included other needs of victims and survivors, wider than safe accommodation support.

1.1.1 What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse causes significant harm to individuals, children, families, and communities. This needs assessment adopts the Government definition of domestic abuse which is outlined in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act¹¹. Central government consulted in March 2018 on a new statutory definition of domestic abuse to ensure that it is properly understood, considered unacceptable and actively challenged across statutory agencies and in public attitudes. The proposed definition expanded on the existing Government non-statutory definition by including the concept of economic abuse rather than simply financial abuse.

According to the Domestic Abuse Act, behaviour by a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected and the behaviour is abusive. Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse.

^a MHCLG is now the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

It must also be recognised that domestic abuse is a gendered crime. Whilst both men and women may experience incidents of inter-personal violence and abuse, women are considerably more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of abuse, including sexual violence.

The terms “victim” and “survivor” are both used throughout this needs assessment, depending on the context. “Survivor” is, however, preferred as it emphasises an active, resourceful and creative response to the abuse¹². However, when discussing particular resources or findings, “victim” may be used if primarily used by other researchers or agencies (e.g. Government documents such as the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 or police). The terms “service user” and “person and/or people who have experienced/are experiencing domestic abuse” may also be used interchangeably instead of “survivor” or “victim”.

The scope of this needs assessment will include the abuse that is included under the government definition of domestic abuse as outlined above.

1.2 National Legislative Context

1.2.1 The Domestic Abuse Act (2021)

The draft Domestic Abuse Bill achieved Royal Assent in April 2021 and is now enshrined in law as the Domestic Abuse Act. The Act is intended to improve the response to domestic abuse as follows:

- **Protect and support victims** – to enhance the safety of victims and the support they receive
- **Transform the justice process** – to provide support to victims throughout the justice process and an effective response to perpetrators to end the cycle of abuse
- **Improve performance** – to drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse
- **Promote awareness** – put domestic abuse at the top of everybody’s agenda.

The new Domestic Abuse Act (2021) has created, for the first time, a cross-government statutory definition of domestic abuse, to ensure that domestic abuse is properly understood, considered unacceptable and actively challenged across statutory agencies and in public attitudes (table 1). The definition of domestic abuse is in two parts. The first part deals with the relationship between the abuser and the abused. The second part defines what constitutes abusive behaviour.

Table 1: Statutory definition of domestic abuse (Domestic Abuse Act 2021)

Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if:

- A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- the behaviour is abusive.

Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse;
- violent or threatening behaviour;
- controlling or coercive behaviour;
- economic abuse (see subsection (4));
- psychological, emotional or other abuse;
- and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

“Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to:

- acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
- obtain goods or services.

For the purposes of this Act A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B’s child).

The Act considered two people are “personally connected” to each other if any of the following applies:

- they are, or have been, married to each other
- they are, or have been, civil partners of each other
- they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child
- they are relatives.

As well as developing a definition in statute, the Act (2021) also positions children as direct victims in their own right for the first time. That means any reference within the Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who:

- sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse, and
- is related to A or B.

It establishes in law the office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner with responsibility to lead on driving improvement in the response to domestic abuse and to champion the rights and needs of victims.

1.2.2 Overview of the Local Authority statutory duties

The new Act includes a number of measures for Local Authorities including placing a statutory duty on Tier 1 Local Authorities to provide support to victims of domestic

abuse and their children within refuges and other safe accommodation. It has created a four-part statutory framework for the delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation and provide clarity over governance and accountability:

- Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in their area, including those who require cross-border support.
- Develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, having regard to the needs assessment.
- Give effect to the strategy (through commissioning / de-commissioning decisions).
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.

Local Authorities will be required to appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which it will consult as it performs certain specified functions. Within the Act there is a definition to support commissioners in understanding what safe accommodation and support means (table 2).

Table 2: Overview of Domestic Abuse Act (2021) definition of support within safe accommodation

Defining safe accommodation	Defining support
<p>Safe accommodation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refuge accommodation • Specialist safe accommodation • Dispersed accommodation • Sanctuary Schemes • Move-on and / or second stage accommodation • Other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation <p>Temporary accommodation such as homelessness hostels, hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation is not considered under this definition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall management of services within relevant accommodation • Support with the day-to-day running of the service • Advocacy support • Domestic abuse prevention advice • Specialist support for victims • Children's support • Housing-related support • Advice service • Counselling and therapy

Commissioning decisions must be based on evidence of local need as established through the needs assessment. This report will provide the basis of the safe accommodation statutory needs assessment using and building on the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) template.

1.2.3 The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017)

As the statutory safe accommodation duties include requirements for Local Authorities to provide support to victims and survivors in safe accommodation, it is important to understand the existing homelessness legislation that could impact victims. In April 2018 the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017¹³ came into force in England, which aims

to refocus Local Authority efforts on the prevention of homelessness. For instance, it introduces **new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness for all eligible people, regardless of priority need, intentionality, or local connection**. It also aims to improve the advice and information about homelessness and encourage public bodies to work together to prevent and relieve homelessness.

Guidance for Local Authorities, which was updated on 5th July 2021 to include the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), explains Local Authorities' duty to help people stay in their home or find alternative accommodation. There is also a responsibility to refer for support, including support for survivors of domestic abuse. This is likely to increase demand for community-based and safe accommodation services.

Below we provide an explanation based on the Act, of the differing levels of statutory duty:

- **Prevention duty:** Local Authorities may deliver their prevention duty through any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness within 56 days from becoming homeless. This would involve activities to enable an applicant to remain in their current home or find alternative accommodation in order to prevent them from becoming homeless. The duty lasts for up to 56 days but may be extended if the Local Authority is continuing with efforts to prevent homelessness.
- **Relief duty:** The relief duty is owed to households that are already homeless on approaching a Local Authority, and so require help to secure settled accommodation. The duty lasts 56 days and can only be extended by a Local Authority if the household is not owed the main homelessness duty.
- **Main duty:** A 'main homelessness duty' is owed where the Authority is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a specified priority need group. Such statutorily homeless households are referred to as 'acceptances'.

Within this needs assessment we will collect and analyse local data in Bristol within these categories and where possible provide national comparisons.

1.2.4 Serious Crime Act (2015)

The Serious Crime Act 2015¹⁴ creates a new offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in intimate or familial relationships. Prior to the introduction of this offence, case law indicated the difficulty in proving a pattern of behaviour amounting to harassment within an intimate relationship. Controlling or coercive behaviour does not relate to a single incident, it is a purposeful pattern of behaviour which takes place

over time in order for one individual to exert power, control or coercion over another. Such behaviours might include:

- Isolating a person from their friends and family
- Depriving them of their basic needs
- Monitoring their time
- Monitoring a person via online communication tools or using spyware
- Taking control over aspects of their everyday life, such as where they can go, who they can see, what to wear and when they can sleep
- Depriving them of access to support services, such as specialist support or medical services
- Repeatedly putting them down such as telling them they are worthless
- Enforcing rules and activity which humiliate, degrade or dehumanise the victim
- Forcing the victim to take part in criminal activity such as shoplifting, neglect or abuse of children to encourage self-blame and prevent disclosure to authorities
- Financial abuse including control of finances, such as only allowing a person a punitive allowance
- Threats to hurt or kill
- Threats to a child
- Threats to reveal or publish private information (e.g., threatening to 'out' someone)
- Assault
- Criminal damage (such as destruction of household goods)
- Rape
- Preventing a person from having access to transport or from working.

The new offence came into force on 29 December 2015 and outlined:

An offence is committed by A if:

- A repeatedly or continuously engages in behaviour towards another person, B, that is controlling or coercive; and
- At time of the behaviour, A and B are personally connected; and
- The behaviour has a serious effect on B; and
- A knows or ought to know that the behaviour will have a serious effect on B.

A and B are 'personally connected' if:

- they are in an intimate personal relationship; or
- they live together and are either members of the same family; or
- they live together and/or have previously been in an intimate personal relationship with each other.

There are two ways in which it can be proved that A's behaviour has a 'serious effect' on B:

- If it causes B to fear, on at least two occasions, that violence will be used against them - s.76 (4)(a); or
- If it causes B serious alarm or distress which has a substantial adverse effect on their day-to-day activities - s.76 (4) (b).

1.2.5 Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004)

The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004)¹⁵ extended provisions to combat domestic violence and creating the new offence of 'causing or allowing the death of a child or vulnerable adult'. Specific elements of the act include:

- Amends non-molestation orders to include a criminal sanction for non-compliance which can carry a prison sentence of up to five years.
- Allows same-sex couples and cohabiting couples to apply for non-molestation orders.
- Allows courts to impose restraining orders on acquitted defendants.
- Allows judges, rather than a specially empanelled jury, to decide if a defendant is fit to plead.
- Expands the circumstances in which trials can be heard without a jury.
- Creates an offence of "causing or allowing the death of a child or vulnerable adult".
- Enables a jury to make inferences about any part of the case (including the guilt of the defendant), based upon the defendant's failure to give evidence if they are charged with the above offence and either or both murder and manslaughter.
- Introduces the provision, which establishes independent investigations of domestic homicides termed "domestic homicide reviews".

1.2.6 The Children Act (1989)

The Children Act 1989¹⁶ provides legislation to aid work in situations where there is a risk posed to children from domestic violence and abuse. The Act:

- Recommends that where possible abusers rather than children should be removed from home (Vol 1. Section 4.31).
- Places a duty on Local Authorities to provide services to Children in Need and provides funds to help children remain within their own families (Section 17).
- Places a duty on Children's Services to investigate the circumstances of a child where they are informed that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm or they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child may be or is likely to suffer significant harm (Section 47).

1.2.7 The Care Act (2014)

The first part of the Care Act 2014¹⁷ came into force in April 2015. It pulls together a patchwork of legislation built up since the 1948 National Assistance Act and begins by defining the primary responsibility of Local Authorities as the promotion of individual wellbeing. There is a shift from the duty to provide services to 'meeting needs', which means putting the person at the centre of the Local Authority's service offer; 'personalisation', rather than a one-size-fits all approach.

The Care Act specifies that freedom from abuse and neglect is a key aspect of a person's wellbeing. Statutory guidance, issued in conjunction with the Care Act, states that abuse takes many forms, and that a wide view should be taken of what constitutes it. In a non-exhaustive list, it includes domestic violence (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse and so called 'honour' based violence) among the types of abuse against which individuals should be protected. It also states that abuse and neglect can be caused deliberately or unintentionally. Key features of the Act include:

- In order to promote individual wellbeing, Local Authorities must establish and maintain an information and advice service accessible to everyone and tailored to the needs of local people. Local Authorities should also put in place arrangements to identify and target those individuals who may benefit from particular types of preventive support.
- Local Authorities must facilitate a diverse, vibrant and sustainable market for care and support services that benefit the whole population. The principles of good commissioning practices are outlined in the Act and Guidance. In relation to safeguarding and domestic abuse the Local Authority should ensure there are a range of social work and legal options etc with which to work with people.
- The Act requires Local Authorities to promote integration with the NHS and other key partners – this will include working through local Health and Wellbeing Boards. Throughout the Act there is an emphasis on collaboration and cooperation.
- The Act aims to put people at the centre of their care and support and maximise their involvement. If individuals experience difficulties in making their wishes known then the Local Authority must arrange for an independent advocate to help them be involved in assessment, planning, appeals or safeguarding. From April 2015, carers will also be entitled to support if they meet the eligibility criteria.
- Needs or carers assessments must be carried out where it appears they are necessary. The assessment should be appropriate, proportionate, person centred and ensure a focus on the duty to promote wellbeing. The Act establishes a national minimum threshold at which people will be eligible for support, subject to their financial circumstances. Once an assessment has been made, there is a duty on Local Authorities to produce care and support plans and to offer a personal budget. This should focus on keeping people directly involved. The Act also sets out a duty to review Care and Support plans to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the person.
- The need for care and support is established with reference to specific criteria. It essentially turns upon whether or not an individual has needs arising from a physical or mental impairment or illness which prevent them from performing two or more of a list of basic functions – such as maintaining personal hygiene and being appropriately clothed – the consequence being a significant impact upon their wellbeing.

- Adult safeguarding is, for the first time, spelt out in the law in the Care Act. Local Authorities must make enquiries, or ensure others do so, if it believes an adult who has needs for care or support is subject to, or is at risk of, being abused or neglected.
- They must also set up a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB), including key stakeholders, to enquire whether any action needs to be taken to stop or prevent abuse or neglect, and if so, by whom. Domestic violence is specifically listed in the guidance as a type of abuse that is appropriate to receive prevention and response strategies from Safeguarding Adults Boards. The SAB must arrange, where appropriate, for an independent advocate to represent and support an adult who is the subject of a safeguarding enquiry or where the adult has 'substantial difficulty' in being involved in the process and where there is no other appropriate adult to help them. The SAB has a duty to cooperate with each of its relevant partners in order to protect adults experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect. This board will also carry out Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) when people die or experience serious harm as a result of neglect or abuse.

1.3 The National Policy Context

1.3.1 The Housing Context

This section considers national policy and research in relation to the housing context with a particular focus on barriers and challenges that exist for victims and survivors in terms of accessing safe accommodation.

A lack of social housing availability

The shortage of social housing means that there are over 1.15 million households on Local Authority waiting lists in the UK, with waiting times running into decades in areas of the highest demand. The supply of new social housing has been in decline since the late 1980s and has contracted sharply in the past decade: 5,380 new homes for social rent were made available in 2016-17 compared to 24,670 a decade earlier in 2006/7¹⁸.

The social sector size criteria (the 'bedroom tax') also impacts victims and survivors' ability to access social housing, particularly single victims, as households looking to downsize reduce the supply of one bed properties¹⁹. It is estimated that between 2012 and 2020, almost a quarter of a million social rented homes will have been 'lost', either through right to buy, converted into affordable rented properties or demolished as part of regeneration schemes²⁰.

Affordability of social housing

Affordability within the social rented sector is also a significant problem for victims and survivors of domestic abuse. Four in five homes delivered by the social sector in 2016/17 were not let at traditional social rent levels, but instead at 'affordable rents'

which are defined as being anything up to 80% of local market rates. The average difference between social and affordable rents across England is around 30%, or £1,400 per year. For a person working full-time on the minimum wage, this would mean paying an extra 10% of their annual income on rent²¹.

Affordability of the private rented sector

Due to the difficulties faced in accessing social rented housing, a number of victims and survivors are looking to the private rented sector (PRS) to find accommodation. The number of households renting from a private landlord has more than doubled in the past 20 years and the PRS is now the second largest tenure in Britain, home to a large and growing number of younger people, with just under half (45%) of private renters aged under 35. Again however, a range of barriers make this type of accommodation difficult to access for victims either fleeing their home or moving on from refuge or safe accommodation.

Affordability is a significant challenge for victims and survivors looking to rent privately. Rents in the private sector have increased steadily since 2010 at a rate three times greater than average wages²², and average rents are now more than a third of full-time local pay in over half of all English districts²³. Victims renting privately today can expect to spend around 35% of their income on housing costs. Rents in the private rented sector mean that for victims who are in lower paid employment or accessing benefits may struggle to meet these costs and are often overlooked in favour of tenants who are seen as more financially secure. Research²⁴ by Kings College found that a significant number of private landlords (69%) when surveyed, would not be happy letting to tenants in receipt of housing benefit or universal credit. As well as high rents, a barrier to renting within the private sector are the considerable upfront costs for deposits and agency fees that many victims and survivors will not have.

According to the National Housing and Domestic Abuse Policy and Practice Group, the private rented sector (PRS) needs to be better informed and aware of what constitutes domestic abuse to improve its response and adhere to safeguarding responsibilities²⁵. Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA) conducted research on the impact of housing tenure on victims of domestic abuse conducting interviews with 79 survivors. They found:

- Victims-survivors often experienced financial penalties related to domestic abuse and housing issues. For example, in some cases survivors needed to end the joint tenancy in order to escape an abusive partner who refused to leave the tenancy. However, under the joint tenancy agreement terms landlords often require a single deposit for the whole tenancy. As a result, one participant found she was liable for damage caused to the property despite the fact that damage was caused by the perpetrator.
- Other survivors found that being classed as a single legal entity under a joint agreement meant they would themselves be liable for the whole rent and/or

bills, i.e. where the perpetrator refused to pay their share, and as result found themselves getting further into debt.

- Joint tenancies within the private rented sector often created legal difficulties which create barriers to achieving safety (and thus justice), either through difficulties in removing a perpetrator from the home in the first place or preventing them re-entering the home. Without a court order, abusive perpetrators who are joint tenants seemingly have equal right to access the property/home whenever they like. This means that victims-survivors potentially find themselves unable to conduct target hardening, such as changing the locks, without prior permission. This should be a key consideration for local commissioners in terms of sanctuary schemes.

Homeowners and mortgages

In the same research conducted by Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA) as discussed above they also interviewed 68 survivors who owned or mortgaged a home. In many instances they described perpetrators being deliberately obstructive during the separation process, resulting in the victim-survivors facing financial difficulties and being effectively trapped (financially or physically/geographically) as they found themselves unable to leave the home. Post separation abuse was often paired with practical and financial challenges. A number of victims had been left in large amounts of debt as a result of abuse and despite having assets on paper (i.e. owning property) were left struggling with day-to-day finances. A challenge for homeowners with a mortgage is the need for them to liaise with banks and building societies rather than landlords, which relies on their understanding of domestic abuse. The needs of victims and survivors who are homeowners is often legal and financial advice which they found was expensive and not a skill of most specialist domestic abuse services. A key challenge for home owning survivors can be the length of time the legal processes take, which can be a number of years, and in the meantime, survivors described being ineligible for assistance such as housing benefit, access to refuge or legal aid.

1.3.2 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy

In July 2021 the Home Office published its new VAWG strategy²⁶. The strategy provides a note on the terminology of VAWG:

The term ‘violence against women and girls’ refers to acts of violence or abuse that we know disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, ‘honour’-based abuse (including female genital mutilation forced marriage, and ‘honour’ killings), as well as many others, including offences committed online. While we use the term ‘violence against women and girls’, throughout the strategy, this refers to all victims of any of these offences.

The key priorities within the strategy are:

- Prioritising prevention
- Supporting victims

- Pursuing perpetrators
- A stronger system.

The strategy highlights a number of important challenges in responding to domestic abuse including the fact that prosecutions are showing a downward trend. It states that fewer cases of domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault are being charged by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and progressing to court. In 2019/20, 34% fewer domestic abuse cases were prosecuted compared to 2014/15. At the higher spectrum it also highlights the number of homicides, of which domestic homicide accounts for around a fifth of all homicides, and it is estimated that the cost of each homicide to society is £3.7 million (2021/22 prices).

1.3.3 The Victims Code (2020)

The Victims Code (2020)²⁷ sets out the services and a minimum standard for these services that must be provided to victims of crime by service providers across England and Wales. It sets out twelve rights that range from receiving the right level of information and communication through to victims' rights for compensation and to have expenses paid. The code was updated in April 2021 and included key guidance that could have a positive impact for victims and survivors of domestic abuse including:

- Eligible victims will be automatically referred to the Victim Contact Scheme (VCS) and offered a Victim Liaison Officer (VLO), who provides vital updates on offenders as they serve their sentence, including their potential release from prison. A VLO can also help victims apply for licence conditions to reduce the chance of them encountering an offender in the community and assist with requesting reviews of Parole Board decisions.
- Victims of sexual violence or domestic abuse will be able to choose the sex of police officers that interview them. They will also be directed towards the support of independent advisors who provide emotional and practical help, regardless of whether the crime is reported to the police.
- The ability for vulnerable victims to have their cross-examination pre-recorded away from the courtroom - reducing the stress of giving evidence in court, which many find intimidating.
- Greater flexibility over when and how a Victim Personal Statement (VPS), which tells the court how the crime has affected the victim, can be made – recognising that for many the impact of the crime may not be immediately apparent. Victims will also be able to request a copy of their VPS for them to refer to in future.
- The right to be informed the reasons why a suspect will not be prosecuted. If unhappy, victims will also be able to ask the police or Crown Prosecution Service to review this decision.
- For the first time, the Code sets out the rights of victims of Foreign National Offenders to be updated on when an offender's deportation may occur.

1.4 The local strategic and policy context in Bristol

This section considers the local context in Bristol City in relation to domestic abuse including an overview of:

- The local domestic abuse strategy
- The local domestic abuse partnership
- Learning from previous reviews and assessments.

The aim of this section is to provide additional context to the needs assessment and consider how the findings and recommendations will be taken forward locally.

1.4.1 Mayoral Commission on Domestic Abuse Report

In 2020, the Mayoral Commission on Domestic Abuse was formed, which included twenty-eight local and national organisations who took part in five themed workshops. These workshops produced the series of principles to help prevent domestic abuse. The report²⁸ sets out Bristol's response to domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The report sets out 7 overarching principles that will provide the framework for Bristol's response:

1. We will start with you, and what's right for you.
2. If you have children, we will work with you to support you.
3. It is your home... if you want the person who is hurting, scaring, or controlling you to be told to leave and not return, we will take action.
4. If staying in your home isn't right for you, or you need a safe home to go to, we will do everything we can to make that happen.
5. There are a range of support services available... There will always be a person available to talk to you and help.
6. In every corner of our city, we will work to eliminate sexual violence and abuse.
7. Domestic abuse and sexual violence are everybody's business.

Under each principle sits a total of 35 key recommendations.

1.4.2 Local Domestic Abuse Partnership

1.4.2.1 *Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership (2020-23)*

The Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership (KBSP) is a joined-up partnership providing oversight of the children and adult safeguarding as well as community safety functions. The KBSP has responsibility to deliver statutory duties to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children as required by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018²⁹; to help and protect adults at risk of neglect and/or abuse by delivering the functions of a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) as required by The Care Act 2014 ; and to protect local communities from crime and to help people feel safe by delivering the functions of a Community Safety Partnership Board (CSP) in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 .

Priority 1 of the KBSP is to ‘develop a whole-life course strategic approach to Serious Violence and Domestic Abuse’. Underneath this priority there are three key objectives around delivering a robust domestic abuse approach (table 3).

Table 3 : KBSP Strategic Priorities for Domestic Abuse

Strategic priority	What we want to achieve
3. Domestic Abuse Response across the life course	
Commission and deliver domestic abuse services which are trauma-informed and recovery-focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalising a multi-agency domestic abuse strategy focusing on a more responsive and assertive outreach offer to victims; investing in recovery services - Provide safe housing for victims of abuse and domestic abuse perpetrators
Proactive in our outreach to victims and perpetrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a pathway for domestic abuse services which recognises the cycle of change for victims of abuse including services for victims who remain in abusive relationship or who require more assertive engagement
Reducing demands for services as children live free from domestic abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage in the Research in Practice Domestic Abuse and Child Protection study to contribute to the national evidence base and learning on protection of children from domestic abuse - Learning will be taken from Domestic Homicide Reviews and a robust learning loop will be implemented within the Partnership

1.4.2.2 *Bristol Domestic Abuse Strategy 2015-2020*

The Domestic Abuse Strategy (2015-2020) had a vision to:

“Take a zero-tolerance approach to domestic and sexual violence and abuse: there are no excuses for gender-based violence. To effectively prevent gender-based violence and abuse through campaigns, education and training, support victims to cope and recover from violence and abuse, and hold perpetrators to account”.

The strategy outlines that to deliver this vision the partnership take a feminist lens to the issue and are committed to deliver a coordinated community response.

Following delays due to the Covid pandemic, the new strategy for Bristol is due to be published in 2022.

1.4.2.3 *The Multi-agency Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Delivery Group*

The Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (named Multi-agency Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (MADASV) Delivery Group hereafter) is a partnership group responsible for supporting Bristol City Council in meeting its duty under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act.

The MADASV Delivery Group will work together to support, advise and work in partnership with Bristol City Council to ensure victims of domestic abuse have access to adequate and appropriate support within safe accommodation services, in order to:

- Improve outcomes for victims of domestic abuse, including their children, through a strategic approach to identifying and addressing gaps in support within safe accommodation services.
- Improve outcomes for victim-survivors of sexual violence, through a strategic approach that considers the victim-survivors support needs from crisis to recovery and ensures there is a focus on those with multiple risks and vulnerabilities.

Other roles and responsibilities of the group include:

- Provide advice and data to support Bristol City Council to undertake a robust local needs assessment to identify and understand the needs of domestic abuse and sexual violence victims within their area (including those that present from out of area).
- Provide expert advice and data to support the development of a local strategy, agreeing the appropriate steps needed to meet the needs identified.
- Support Bristol City Council to effectively engage with domestic abuse and sexual violence victims and expert services in understanding the range and complexity of needs.
- Support Bristol City Council to make commissioning and decommissioning decisions (where appropriate). This can include when and how commissioning is undertaken to ensure the best and most appropriate services are made available for victims.
- [Members will] support in ensuring join up across other related areas such as housing, health, early years and childhood support, social services and police and crime services [not limited to].
- Advise and support in dealing with issues raised and identified from engagement through formal and informal routes.
- Escalate issues to the relevant representative / body.
- Use the recommendations of Domestic Homicide Reviews to inform strategy development.
- Have oversight of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process for Bristol.

- Be committed to identifying evidence-based interventions for perpetrators of DV who are subject to statutory supervision and/or who pose a risk of harm to families, current or future partners.
- Ensure perpetrators of domestic abuse and Sexual violence will be managed using a multi-agency approach to ensure timely sharing of information between agencies. Our aim is to ensure that our focus will be the creation of a shared dynamic risk management plan on those perpetrators that come to the notice of statutory and non-statutory agencies.

1.5 National Prevalence of domestic abuse

A comprehensive picture of the extent of domestic abuse remains a challenge, both nationally and locally. Estimates often depend on a 'snapshot' of data from a range of agencies and individual studies. It is important to remember when considering data from sources – such as service providers and offences recorded by the police– that most cases of domestic abuse are not reported. In fact, many victims will not tell anyone about what has happened to them. For this reason, the estimated number of victims is much higher than the number of incidents and crimes recorded. Of the cases which do come to the attention of the police, many, although still recorded as incidents and dealt with as required, will fall short of notifiable offences and are therefore not recorded as crimes. Approximately half of domestic abuse-related crimes that are recorded by the police do not result in an arrest and a large proportion has evidential difficulties in proceeding with prosecution.

The data that is available suggests that women are more likely than men to experience domestic abuse in their lives and to suffer repeated victimisation. They are also more likely to be injured or have to seek medical help. Another difference is that men are less likely to be murdered by female abusers. While men are at risk of, and do experience domestic abuse, women experience more repeated physical violence, more severe violence, much more sexual violence, more coercive control, more injuries and more fear of their partner³⁰. It is important to note that whilst domestic abuse is often a gendered crime, there are experiences of domestic abuse in same sex relationships and men in heterosexual relationships can be victims.

1.5.1 Domestic abuse prevalence in the UK

Domestic abuse is a widespread issue, affecting millions across the UK. On average the police receive an emergency call relating to domestic abuse every 30 seconds³¹. It is estimated that each year an estimated 5.5% of adults aged 16 to 74 years (2.3 million) experienced domestic abuse³². Of these, up to 100,000 victims are at risk of being murdered or seriously injured as a result of the abuse they are experiencing (SafeLives, 2015)³³. However, the problem is much bigger than shown in official statistics. Researchers³⁴ estimate that domestic abuse statistics are 140% higher than those stated in the Crime Survey for England and Wales. It must also be acknowledged that those over 74 are still experiencing domestic abuse but this group is often hidden and not included in data.

Refuge³⁵ estimates that on average two women a week are killed by perpetrators of domestic abuse and up to 30 women every day will attempt to take their own life due to the abuse. Domestic abuse-related homicides account for approximately 35% of all homicides in England and Wales; on average two women a week are killed by their current or former partners. Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) highlights that 58% of women murdered by their partner were still in a relationship with them and 29% were separated. A 2009 national analysis of Serious Case Reviews found evidence of past or present domestic abuse in over half (53 per cent) of cases³⁶.

Between 2009 and 2020 in the UK³⁷ a woman was killed every three days by a man. The Femicide 10-year report³⁸ found a woman was killed by her male partner or former partner every four days. In 92% of cases the victim knew, was related to, or had some kind of relationship or acquaintance with the perpetrator. Over half (62%) of women killed by men were killed by a current or former intimate partner.

1.5.2 Domestic abuse over the pandemic

The Office for National Statistics (2020)³⁹ found a mixed picture in terms of the prevalence over the pandemic. Police recorded crime data highlighted an increase in offences flagged as domestic abuse-related during the pandemic, but due to the ongoing gradual increase in police recorded domestic abuse-related offences over recent years as police have improved their recording of these offences, they could not determine whether the increase in offences was able to be directly attributed to the coronavirus pandemic. During the initial lockdown there was an increase in some protective orders, namely non-molestation orders, however this was combined with a decrease in other orders such as occupation orders.

There was an increase in the severity of abuse over the pandemic with around 64 domestic homicides recorded by the police in England and Wales between January and June 2020. Almost half of those (n=30) occurred in the period April to June 2020. This represents an increase in the number of domestic homicides recorded by the police compared with the same six-month period in the previous year (55), but a slight decrease compared with 2018 (67).

Women's Aid (2020)⁴⁰ conducted a number of surveys over the course of the pandemic to understand the impact on services and victims. Their surveys found:

- Of the 69 victims answering the June Survivor Survey, who were currently experiencing abuse, 52% felt the pandemic had had a bad effect on their mental health and that they were less able to cope with the abuse).
- A large proportion of these victims (91%) said the pandemic had impacted their experiences of abuse in one or more ways, where 58% said they felt they had no one to turn to for help, 52% felt more afraid and 51% reported that the violence and/or abuse had got worse.

- Of the 32 women currently experiencing abuse who had children, 53% reported that their children had witnessed more abuse towards them, and 50% were scared that their children would be left alone with the abuser if they were to get ill.
- When asked about their plans post-lockdown, 46% of women who were currently experiencing abuse showed an intention to leave or seek support.

In terms of the impact specifically on the demand for specialist domestic abuse services, there were a number of considerable increases. Between April-June 2020, Refuge's Helpline team logged a total of 40,397 calls and contacts on its database, a 65% increase.⁴¹ This equates to an average of 444 calls and contacts per day at the height of the pandemic, compared with an average of 270 per day from January to March. Refuge also saw a 700% increase in the number of visits to its Helpline website (from 26,320 to 210,620). This was the same picture across community-based services with the Women's Aid (2020) survey finding 80% of the 30 community-based services responding highlighted increased demand services, as well as accommodation-based services of which 58% of the 26 responding noted an increase.

1.5.3 Crime Survey for England and Wales

A key source of information for understanding the prevalence of domestic abuse is the yearly Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)⁴²:

- An estimated 2.3 million adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2020, equating to a prevalence rate of approximately 5 in 100 adults.
- It is estimated that 1.6 million women and 757,000 men aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2020⁴³. This is a prevalence rate of approximately 7 in 100 women and 4 in 100 men.
- The police recorded a total of 1,288,018 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes in England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police)^b in the year ending March 2020.
- Of these, 758,941 were recorded as domestic abuse-related crimes, an increase of 9% from the previous year.
- As the survey showed no change, the increase in police recorded crime may reflect improved recording by the police and increased reporting by victims.

The estimates do not take into account the context and impact of the abusive behaviours experienced. The levels of domestic abuse committed by partners and by families are both reported. It is further broken down into four categories: partner abuse (non-sexual), family abuse carried out by a family member other than a partner (non-

^b Data for Greater Manchester Police on domestic abuse-related incidents and domestic abuse-related crimes are not included in this publication because of issues with their data supply following the implementation of new IT systems.

sexual), sexual assault and stalking. A number of people who report being victims of domestic abuse will have experienced more than one of these categories and this should be considered when looking at the figures below. It is also important to note that the survey only includes people up to the age of 74, but domestic abuse is also an issue for people in this older age group too but will not be captured through this survey.

Of crimes recorded by the police⁴⁴:

- In the year ending March 2020, the victim was female in 74% of domestic abuse-related crimes.
- Between the year ending March 2017 and the year ending March 2019, 77% of victims of domestic homicide were female compared with 13% of victims of non-domestic homicide.

The latest figures from the CSEW show little change in the prevalence of domestic abuse in recent years. Headlines from the CSEW for people's experiences in the last year:

- Women aged 16 to 19 years were significantly more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last year than women aged 25 years and over.
- For men, there were few significant differences by age, however, those aged 55 to 74 years were less likely to be victims of domestic abuse in the last year than those in most other age groups.
- Those in the Mixed ethnic group were significantly more likely to experience domestic abuse within the last year than those in the Black or Asian ethnic groups.
- In the White ethnic group, women were significantly more likely than men to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year (7.7% of women, compared with 3.6% of men).
- For partner abuse, those in the White and Mixed ethnic groups were significantly more likely to be victims than those in the Asian ethnic group. For family abuse, those in the White and Mixed ethnic groups were significantly more likely to be victims than those in the Black ethnic group.
- Adults aged 16 to 74 years who were separated or divorced were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse than those who were married or civil partnered, cohabiting, single or widowed.
- For the year ending March 2020, the Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that men and women aged 16 to 74 years with a disability were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without.
- Of adults aged 16 to 74 years, those who were unemployed were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse within the last year than those who were employed or economically inactive.

- Those who lived in a single-parent household were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those living in a no-children household or a household with other adults and children.
- There were no significant differences in the likelihood of being a victim of domestic abuse between those who live in urban and rural areas.

2. What is the size of the issue in Bristol?

2.1 Estimated Prevalence of domestic abuse

This section provides an overview of the estimated prevalence and capacity needs based on the population. It uses a range of sources including the Office for National Statistics (2020) mid-year estimates alongside the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020) prevalence ratios. Alongside each estimate, a brief literature review has been amalgamated to provide an overview of what the estimate might mean in terms of the needs of each cohort.

This section considers the local population size^c alongside the domestic abuse evidence base^d to estimate how many people in Bristol will have experienced domestic abuse. Estimates can be modelled on the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and using the Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year population estimates to help build a picture of domestic abuse prevalence in Bristol. In 2020, the total population in Bristol was 463,377. To estimate the prevalence of domestic abuse we consider the population aged over 16 in line with the statutory definition of domestic abuse. There are 377,594 individuals aged 16 or over in Bristol of which we can estimate around **67,150 will have experienced domestic abuse over their lifetime**. On an annual basis, this equates to 19,960 individuals every year who experience domestic abuse (both familial and intimate partner violence).

2.1.1 Age

This section provides an overview of the age demographic within Bristol, estimated prevalence across the age categories and an overview of the literature base to understand what the data tells us about need. The section is split into three categories: children, young people and older people.

2.1.1.1 Children

In Bristol there are 158,650 children and young people between the ages of 0-24. Of those 94,136 were under the age of 18 so legally defined as children. The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) clarifies arrangements around definitions of children and what it means in the context of domestic abuse:

Abuse in relationships between those under the age of 16 years will be treated as child abuse as a matter of law and child safeguarding procedures should be followed. It is

^c Office for National Statistics Mid-year estimates (2020)

^d Crime survey for England and Wales (2020)

important to remember that abuse perpetrated by someone over the age of 18 against someone under the age of 18 also constitutes child abuse as a matter of law.

Overall, 20.3% (n=94,136) of the population in Bristol are under the age of 18 which is in line with the national average which indicates that 21% of the overall population of England and Wales was aged under 18 years.

Table 4: Overview of children 0-24 in Bristol (ONS, 2020)

	Female	Male	Total
0-5	16405	17576	33981
6-11	16010	16915	32925
12-15	9383	9494	18877
16-17	4095	4258	8353
18-24	32907	31607	64514
Total	78,800	79,850	158,650

Research⁴⁵ from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) has found that around one in five children have been exposed to domestic abuse, and that one third of children witnessing domestic abuse also experience another form of abuse. However, research has shown that as few as 3.4% of referrals to Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) services, and 3.2% of MARAC referrals, come from Children's Social Care (SafeLives, 2020)⁴⁶. Despite this, domestic abuse remains a leading child protection issue nationally with 51% of Child in Need (CIN) assessments identified domestic abuse. In section 2.3.4 of this report, we explore how many children are visible through the domestic abuse service and children's service.

Children have historically been invisible as victims, although they too suffer from the detrimental impacts associated with family violence (Beetham et al., 2019)⁴⁷ however it is now well recognised that the exposure of children to any form of family violence constitutes child abuse (Saunders & Oehme, 2007)⁴⁸. This is whether children are directly physically harmed, witness physical or emotional abuse within the home, or are not directly present but aware that abuse is happening (Gregory et al., 2019⁴⁹; Kitzmann et al., 2003⁵⁰; MacMillan & Wathen, 2014⁵¹). It is therefore a significant positive development that the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) now formally recognised children that have lived in homes where there is domestic abuse as 'direct' victims in their own right, and also places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to provide support to them within safe accommodation.

2.1.1.2 *Young People*

Domestic abuse is prevalent within the intimate relationships of younger people. Although the statutory definition of domestic abuse has included 16 and 17 year olds since 2013, there remains a gap in younger people being identified with only 1.1% of MARAC referrals nationally being for 16-17 year olds (SafeLives, 2019)⁵². In the year

ending March 2020, the data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)⁵³ shows that women aged 16 to 19 years were significantly more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last year than women aged 25 years and over. For men, there were few significant differences by age.

Based on the population of young people in Bristol we estimate that **6,340 young people between 16-24^e** will experience domestic abuse every year. Of those around a quarter (n=800, 12.6%) will be 16-17 year olds.

Table 5: Young victims of domestic abuse (ONS and CSEW, 2020)

Sex	Number of young people (16-17)	Estimated number experiencing domestic abuse	Number of young people (18-24)	Estimated number experiencing domestic abuse	Total number 16-24 experiencing domestic abuse
Female	4,095	570	32,907	3,930	4,500
Male	4,258	230	31,607	1,610	1,840

The new Domestic Abuse Act (2021) continues to define domestic abuse victims as individuals over the age of 16, however it has also recognised children as direct victims in their own right, so understanding how many children and young people there are across the area is important. Although the definitions do not, it is vital that local commissioners consider how young people under the statutory definition age of 16 might experience abuse and harmful behaviours within their dating relationships.

A study of 13- to 17-year-olds by NSPCC⁵⁴ suggests this abuse can begin even earlier in adolescence for large numbers of young people. A quarter (25%) of girls and 18% of boys in the study reported having experienced some form of physical violence from an intimate partner. SafeLives' 'Safe Young Lives' report (2019)⁵⁵ highlighted some of the challenges younger people experience in having their needs met. SafeLives' Children's Insights data found that nearly all (95%) of young people experiencing intimate partner violence were female.

There has been research by a number of organisations into the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of younger people and how perceptions of healthy relationships could provide an insight into prevalence amongst young people under the age of 16:

- A survey of 13- to 17-year-olds found that a quarter (25%) of girls and 18% of boys reported having experienced some form of physical violence from an intimate partner⁵⁶.
- 49% of boys and 33% of girls aged 13-14 thought that hitting a partner would be 'okay' in at least one of twelve scenarios they were presented with.

^e This is based on the number of young people in the population from the ONS (2020) mid-year estimates and the prevalence amongst young people in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020).

2.1.1.3 Older people

In terms of older victims of domestic abuse, data has previously been limited due to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) only collecting data from 16–59-year-olds. From April 2017, the upper age limit for the self-completion module was increased to ask all respondents aged 16 to 74.

In total there are 79,308 people over the age of 60 in Bristol which makes up 17% of the total population^f. This is slightly lower (>5%) than the national average in which around 22% of the population in England and Wales who are aged 60 or over.

Based on the age of the population in Bristol we estimate around **2,570 individuals over the age of 60 will experience domestic abuse** every year^g.

Table 6: Older victims of domestic abuse (ONS and CSEW, 2020)

	Number of older people (60-74)	Estimated number experiencing abuse in last year	Number of older people (Over 75)	Estimated number experiencing abuse in last year	Total older people experience abuse in last year
Female	26,077	1,140	16,528	730	1,870
Male	24,805	470	11,898	230	700

In terms of prevalence, the CSEW data shows those aged 55 to 74 years were less likely to be victims of domestic abuse in the year ending March 2020 than those in most other age groups. However, the CSEW previously did not capture data on victims of domestic abuse aged over 74, and older victims of domestic abuse are ‘hugely underrepresented’ in domestic abuse services. This is reflected in the results of the 2019 Women’s Aid Annual Survey, which found that only around 3.4% of their service users were over the age of 60. However, ‘older victims experience abuse for twice as long before seeking help than those aged under 61’ and are much more likely to continue living with the perpetrator even after getting support (SafeLives, 2020)⁵⁷. We also know from Domestic Homicide data that a larger proportion of domestic homicide victims were aged 65 years and over (18%) compared with non-domestic homicide victims (7%). In terms of the nature of abuse experienced research carried out by SafeLives shows that ‘victims aged over 61 years are much more likely to experience abuse from an adult family member or current intimate partner than those 60 and under’ (SafeLives, 2020). This could have an impact therefore on the safe accommodation needs, particularly where family members or partners have a caring role.

^f ONS (2020) mid-year estimates.

^g This is based on the number of young people in the population from the ONS (2020) mid year estimates and the prevalence amongst older people in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020) for over 75 we have used SafeLives estimates based on Insights data (2020).

2.1.2 Gender

Based on the population split of men and women in Bristol, **we estimate that there are 13,380 female, and 6,580 male victims of domestic abuse each year^h.**

Table 7: Overview of sex of estimated victims

16-74 year olds				75+		
	Population number	Domestic abuse prevalence rate (ONS, 2020)	Estimated number of victims	Population number	Domestic abuse prevalence rate (SafeLives Insights, 2020)	Estimated number of victims
Female	172,880	7.3%	12,650	16,528	4.4%	730
Male	176,288	3.6%	6,350	11,898	1.9%	230
Total	349,168	-	19,000	28,426	-	960

Domestic abuse is part of the Government's VAWG agenda as a crime that disproportionately affects women and girls. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recognises the high prevalence of domestic abuse for women finding almost one third (27%) of women aged 15-49 years who have been in a relationship report that they have been subjected to some form of physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner. This section will explore:

- The higher prevalence of domestic abuse for women and girls
- The impact of disproportionality on men and boys.

In the UK, data⁵⁸ supplied from 28 police forces for the year ending March 2020 showed the victim was female in just under three-quarters (74%) of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police. This proportion was similar for most offence categories, though for domestic abuse-related sexual offences, the proportion of victims that were female was even higher, at 94%. From data on callers to the national domestic abuse helpline in the year ending March 2020, 93% identified as female.

Between the year ending March 2017 and the year ending March 2019, 77% of victims of domestic homicide were female. This compares with 13% of victims in non-domestic homicides. Two women a week are killed by a current or former partner, and it is estimated that around three women a week die by suicide due to domestic abuse (Walby, 2004)⁵⁹, although new research suggests this could be higher. We can therefore understand that women are not only more likely to experience domestic

^h This is based on the number of young people in the population from the ONS (2020) mid-year estimates and the prevalence across gender the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020).

abuse than men, but that the severity of abuse including physical violence and homicide is also increased.

Although women are more likely to experience abuse, a considerable number of men will also experience domestic abuse and their needs must also be understood.

Mankind (2021)⁶⁰ discussed the complexity of this as a cohort that are:

- invisible
- often unaware of existing support
- not being referred/signposted to appropriate support
- limited or no services for them already in place including accommodation services.

From their estimates, around 300 men across the UK may be rough sleepers due to domestic abuse. Men are less likely to access services with men making up only 4.4% of victims of domestic abuse being supported by local domestic services. 61% of the men who call the Mankind Initiative helpline have never spoken to anyone about the abuse they are suffering and 64% would not have called if the helpline was not anonymous.

2.1.3 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Queer/Questioning

The UK Government estimates that 5-7% of the population are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer/questioning. Taking the higher estimate of 7% we can estimate that there are around 26,430 individuals in Bristol that identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer/questioning.

Although we are unable to include within our prevalence transgender estimates due to the lack of data nationally, we can estimate the prevalence of abuse within lesbian, gay and bisexual communities using a combination of CSEW and SafeLives Insights data. Based on this we estimate in Bristol that there will be around 2,410 victims of domestic abuse within the LGB+ community every year.

Table 8: Estimated prevalence within LGB+ communityⁱ

	Estimated number of LGB+ (16+)	Estimated number experience domestic abuse in the last year (based on CSEW LGBT prevalence rate)
Female	13,260	1,620
Male	13,170	790
Total	26,430	2,410

ⁱ This is based on the number of young people in the population from the ONS (2020) mid-year estimates and the prevalence amongst people in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020).

It is notable that as this estimate does not include transgender people as the crime survey sample size is too small, the true figure is likely to be higher.

SafeLives (2018) report 'Free to be safe: LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse'⁶¹ found a number of notable findings in relation to victims and survivors identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer/questioning such as:

- LGBT+ victims of domestic abuse are almost twice as likely to have attempted suicide.
- LGBT+ victims are more than twice as likely to have self-harmed.
- LGBT+ victims of domestic abuse are more likely to be abused by multiple perpetrators (15% compared to 9% of non-LGBT+ victims).

They also found some differences in the prevalence rates of the types of abuse that LGBT+ people experience.

The ONS (2018)⁶² reported that bisexual women are nearly twice as likely (10.9%) as heterosexual women (6%) to report partner abuse. Lesbian women are also more likely than heterosexual women to report partner abuse (8% to 6%).

2.1.4 Marriage and Civil Partnership

Crime data for the year ending March 2020 showed that adults who were separated or divorced were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse compared than those who were married or civil partnered, cohabiting, single or widowed. However, it is important to note that those who have separated from an abusive partner are more likely to disclose abuse or report a related crime than those still in a relationship. Domestic abuse is known to escalate at the point of separation, increasing the likelihood that someone will report it.

Looking at more broad data relating to relationship status, of the male victims who called the national domestic abuse helpline, 95% reported that the perpetrator was a female partner or ex-partner (Office for National Statistics, 2020)⁶³. Data from the homicide index between the year ending March 2017 and the year ending March 2019 shows that, of the 274 female domestic homicide victims in that period, the suspect was a partner or ex-partner in 222 (or 81%) of cases. Of the 83 male domestic homicide victims, the suspect was a partner or ex-partner in 38 (or 46%) of cases.

2.1.5 Pregnancy and Maternity

In 2019, there were 7,038 conceptions in Bristol (ONS, 2021)^j. If we use the national prevalence rate of domestic abuse amongst women (7.3%), we can **estimate at least 513 pregnant women might experience domestic abuse each year.**

^j [Conceptions in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

It is known that domestic abuse can escalate in pregnancy, putting both the victim and their unborn child at significant risk. In fact, domestic abuse has overtaken gestational diabetes and pre-eclampsia as the leading cause of foetal death⁶⁴. Around 30% of domestic abuse begins during pregnancy, while 40–60% of women experiencing domestic abuse are abused during pregnancy⁶⁵. Data from the charity Refuge reported that 20% of women in their safe accommodation provisions were either pregnant or had recently given birth (Refuge, 2018)⁶⁶.

NHS maternity services provide care and support to women before giving birth (antenatal care), during the birth and in the six-to-eight-week period after the birth (postnatal care). The Care Quality Commission (CQC)⁶⁷ conducted a survey of women that had received maternity services in which 17,151 women (37%) responded. Midwives can often be the first port of call for victims experiencing domestic abuse so the survey finding that 83% of women always felt 'listened to' by their midwife was positive.

2.1.6 Ethnicity

The total non-white population in Bristol is 108,926 which is around 23.5% of the total population. This is considerably higher than any other area across the Avon and Somerset police force area with the other four Local Authorities ranging from 5% to 9.5%. This means Bristol has at least 50% more Black, Asian & minoritised communities residents than its neighbouring areas. Using this figure alongside the estimated prevalence of domestic abuse we can estimate that around **3,450 victims of domestic abuse in Bristol will be from a minoritised community^k**.

Table 9: Overview of the population based on ethnicity (ONS, 2019)

	Total population	White/White British	Other White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Other	Total BAME
Avon and Somerset region	1,719,029	1,524,043	61,499	39,217	48,608	37,971	7,692	194,986
Bristol City	463,377	354,451	22,893	21,688	27,615	32,154	4,575	108,926
Regional comparisons								
Bath and North East Somerset	193,282	174,748	7270	4,169	4,772	1,404	919	18534
North Somerset	215,052	201844	6406	2666	2938	721	477	13208
South Gloucestershire	285,093	260688	7666	5235	7800	2597	1107	24405
Somerset County Council	562,225	532,312	17,264	5,459	5,482	1,095	613	29,913

^k CSEW (2020)

Source: Population denominators by broad ethnic group and for White British, Local Authorities in England and Wales: 2011 to 2019

These are estimates for Local Authority denominators for England and Wales for 2011 to 2019; using the standard five way ethnicity classification with an additional split for White British, and including single year of age and sex. These estimates are consistent with the mid-year population estimates released March 2018.

These denominators are neither National Statistics nor standard published experimental statistics and have not been produced using methods which have undergone formal Quality Assurance. They have been produced specifically for use as part of the Race Disparity Audit, following discussion with the Race Disparity Unit of their specific requirements and timeframe.

For the year ending March 2020, the CSEW showed that those in the Mixed ethnic group were significantly more likely to experience domestic abuse within the last year than those in the Black or Asian ethnic groups. In the White ethnic group, women were significantly more likely than men to have experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2020 (7.7% of women, compared with 3.6% of men).

For partner abuse, those in the White and Mixed ethnic groups were significantly more likely to be victims than those in the Asian ethnic group. For family abuse, those in the White and Mixed ethnic groups were significantly more likely to be victims than those in the Black ethnic group. Of callers to the national domestic abuse helpline in the same year, 66% of callers were white (Office for National Statistics, 2020)⁶⁸.

However, Black, Asian & minoritised women are overrepresented in refuge spaces, with Black, Asian & minoritised women occupying 6 in 10 spaces despite occupying only 13% of the general population (Lovatt, et al., 2020)⁶⁹. Likewise, of 99,447 cases discussed at MARAC in the year ending 2020, 16% involved a Black, Asian & minoritised victim.

Data from SafeLives shows that Black, Asian & minoritised clients suffer abuse for 1.5 times longer before seeking help than those from a white British or Irish background (SafeLives, 2020)⁷⁰. Research has also shown that some Black, Asian & minoritised individuals are apprehensive about disclosing abuse due to 'specific issues related to racism including stereotypes about refugees and migrants' (SafeLives, 2015)⁷¹. A further barrier to leaving domestic abuse faced by Black, Asian & minoritised communities is immigration status, with research showing that one in five Black, Asian & minoritised women have no recourse to public funds. In many cases, victims' immigration status is used against them by their perpetrator (Imkaan, 2020)⁷².

2.1.7 Disability

We can estimate there are around 91,740 individuals with a disability in Bristol^l. Of those individuals around **10,520** are likely to experience domestic abuse every year^m.

Table 10: Estimated prevalence of victims with a disability

	Estimated number of people with a disability (16+)	Estimated number experience domestic abuse in the last year
Female	50,320	7,400
Male	41,420	3,120
Total	91,740	10,520

For the year ending March 2020, the Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that men and women aged 16 to 74 years with a disability were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without. Research has shown that 'disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse and are also twice as likely to suffer assault and rape. Yet MARAC data shows that nationally only 3.9% of referrals were for disabled victims, much lower than the SafeLives recommendation of 16% or higher, (SafeLives, 2020)⁷³. Research shows that the number of disabled people referred into domestic abuse services is also low.

2.2 Domestic abuse demand across the system in Bristol

The previous section provided an overview of the estimated number of people in Bristol that have experienced domestic abuse. We know that not all individuals that experience domestic abuse will access support from services. In fact, SafeLives⁷⁴ data highlights that 85% of victims made five attempts on average to get support from professionals in the year before they accessed effective help to stop the abuse. This section explores what we know about victims that do access services in Bristol, from statutory services through to community-based services such as health. Specifically, we will consider local data from:

- **The criminal justice system:** police and probation
- **Housing:** homelessness
- **Children services:** Children Social Care and Early Help and Family Services
- **Health**
- **Adult Social Care.**

^l This estimate is based on the data and definition of limiting long term illness, impairment or disability from [Disabled Survivors Too CORRECTED.pdf \(safelives.org.uk\)](#)

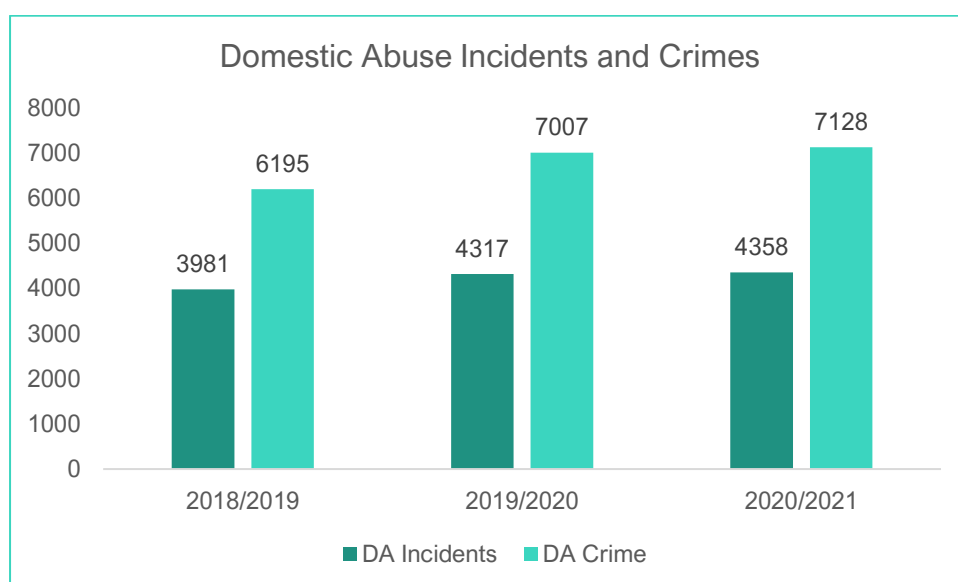
^m This is based on the number of young people in the population from the ONS (2020) mid-year estimates and the prevalence amongst disabled people in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020).

2.2.1 Police

2.2.1.1 Prevalence

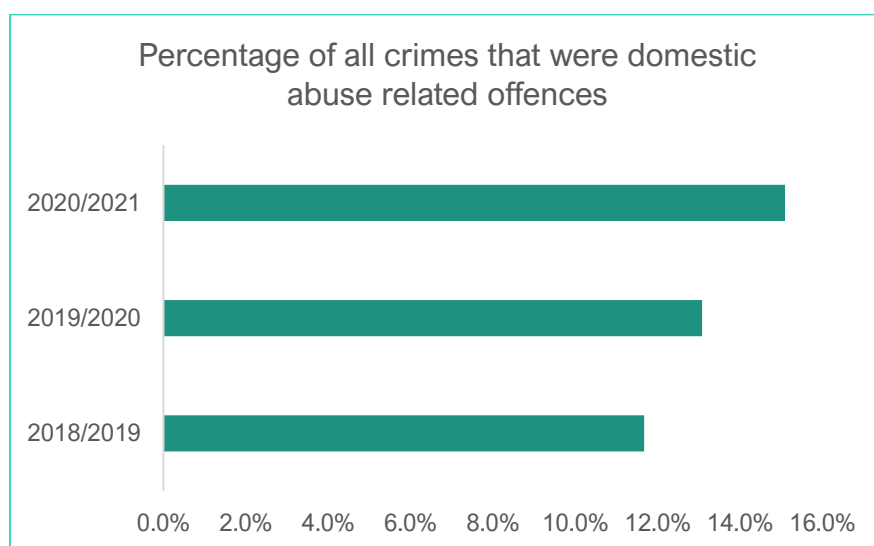
During the past 3-years, a yearly increase of domestic abuse crimes and incidents has been recorded in Bristol City, peaking at 7,128 domestic abuse crimes in 2020-21. This is an increase of almost 1,000 recorded domestic abuse crimes as compared to 2018-19 (figure 1). In the previous section, it was estimated that there will be around 19,960 people experiencing domestic abuse every year. The number of incidents reported to the police do not of course relate to individual victims, as people could report numerous incidents over a year's period so we cannot accurately estimate the percentage of estimated victims that are reporting to the police, although this is indicative of reporting rates which remain considerably lower than the estimated prevalence.

Figure 1: Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes recorded by Police in Bristol



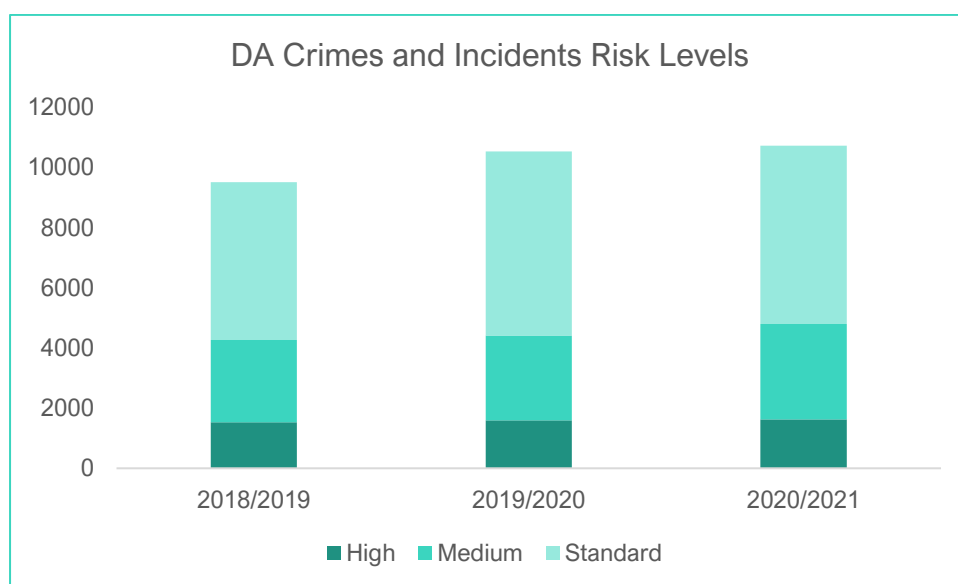
As a proportion of all crimes in Bristol, an increase has been noted in recent years in the percentage of all crimes that were domestic abuse related offences, with 15.1% of total crime being domestic abuse related in 2020-21, up from 11.7% in 2018-19 (figure 2). This is a slightly higher increase than other Local Authority areas who have only seen around a 2% increase. It is also lower than the regional picture in which domestic abuse related crime accounts for 17.8% of all crime. This could mean that people in Bristol are less likely to report abuse to the police, however a more likely scenario is that Bristol is an outlier in terms of the city context and population, so other crime types are more prevalent than the neighbouring Local Authorities rather than there being less domestic abuse related crime.

Figure 2: Percentage of all police recorded crimes that were domestic abuse related offences



The proportion of domestic abuse crimes and incidents classified as ‘standard’, ‘medium’ and ‘high’ risk has remained relatively stable since 2018-19. Approximately 15% to 16% of reports each year are classified as ‘high risk’ (figure 3). This is higher than the regional picture (12%) and makes Bristol the area with the highest levels of high risk domestic abuse across the force. This could suggest that either a) the dynamics of the abuse people in Bristol experience is higher risk than those across the other Local Authority areas, or b) that people in Bristol are not as confident to report and only do so at a point of escalation. Although high risk incidents make up more than the average number of incidents in Bristol, they are still the minority of domestic incidents in Bristol and regionally.

Figure 3: Classification of risk of domestic abuse related crimes and incidents recorded by police



In 2020/21, the rate of domestic abuse related crimes and incidents was 30.3 per 1000 for England⁷⁵. This has increased from 28.0 in 2019/20. Based on local police data, 10,796 domestic offences and incidents were recorded in Bristol in 2020/21, a slight

decrease from 10,873 in 2019/20. The rate of domestic abuse related incidents and crimes per 1,000 population (aged 16 and over) was 28.4 per 1000, a decrease from 28.8 per 1000 in 2019/20. Of those crimes and incidents that were recorded 64.2% met the definition of a crime, up from 62.5% in 2019/20. For Bristol in 2020/21, 43.3% of all recorded domestic abuse related crimes were a repeat incident. Repeat offences are defined as multiple offences committed against the same victim within 12 months of the latest offence.

Whilst all incidents are recorded, not all will meet the definition of a crime so in the data there are more incidents than there are crimes. It is important to note that for police coding, domestic abuse is a classification (or 'tag') to identify cases. The actual offences committed that are classified as crimes include assault, stalking and harassment, theft etc. It is also important to note that the demographic data from police relies on demographic fields being completed in the systems and are not complete datasets. For example, age may be missing in a number of cases, similarly gender may be missing. Some cases may have multiple victims against a single occurrence. The local police data must be understood with these caveats.

Local data on the rate of domestic abuse related incidents and crimesⁿ by ward is available for 2020/21 and highlights a significant variation in rates across the city, from 6.0 per 1000 in Clifton Down to 77.0 per 1000 population in Hartcliffe & Withywood (Figure 4). There is an association between domestic abuse and poverty. Existing analyses in the UK and internationally have consistently found vulnerability to DVA to be associated with low income, economic strain, and benefit receipt^o. Hartcliffe and Withywood is one of the most socio-economically deprived wards in Bristol according to local data^p.

The overall rate of domestic abuse related crimes per 1,000 population in Bristol City has continued to increase over the past three years and was recorded as **16.7 per 1,000 population** in 2020-21, up from 14.5 in 2018-19 (figure 5). Over the three year period this has been higher than the national prevalence rate (13.4) and force wide (13.5), it has the highest domestic abuse crime prevalence of all the Local Authority

ⁿ 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.

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

^p http://167.71.132.100/wards/hartcliffe_and_withywood/deprivation

areas across the force. It makes Bristol a significant outlier in terms of the South West regional picture in which there were only 11.1 crimes per 1,000.

Figure 4: Rate of domestic abuse incidents and crimes 2020/21; Source: Avon & Somerset Constabulary

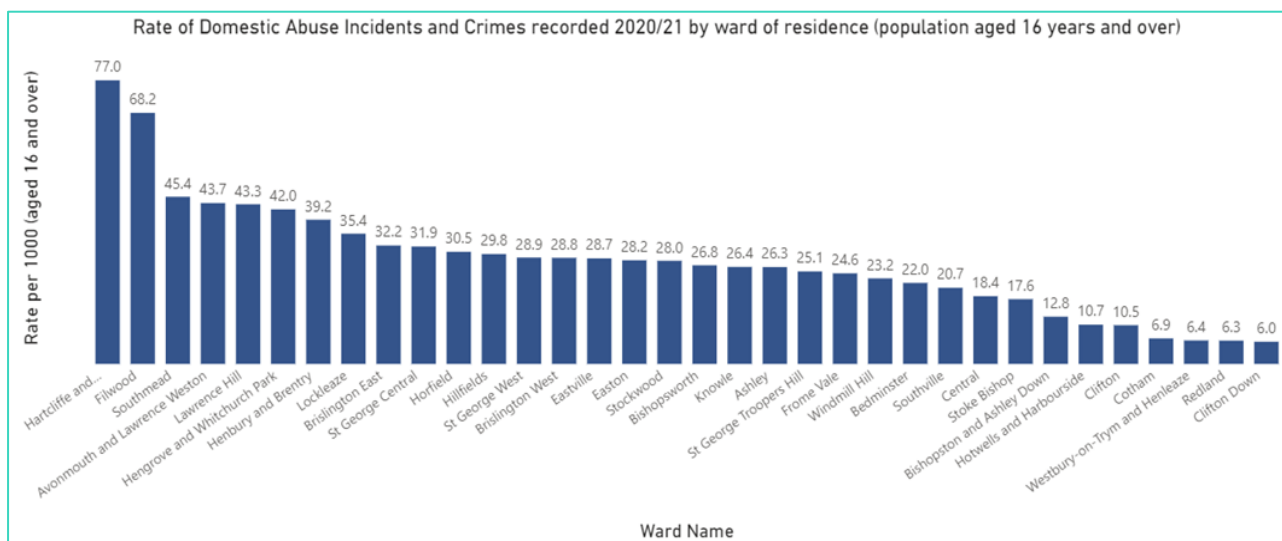
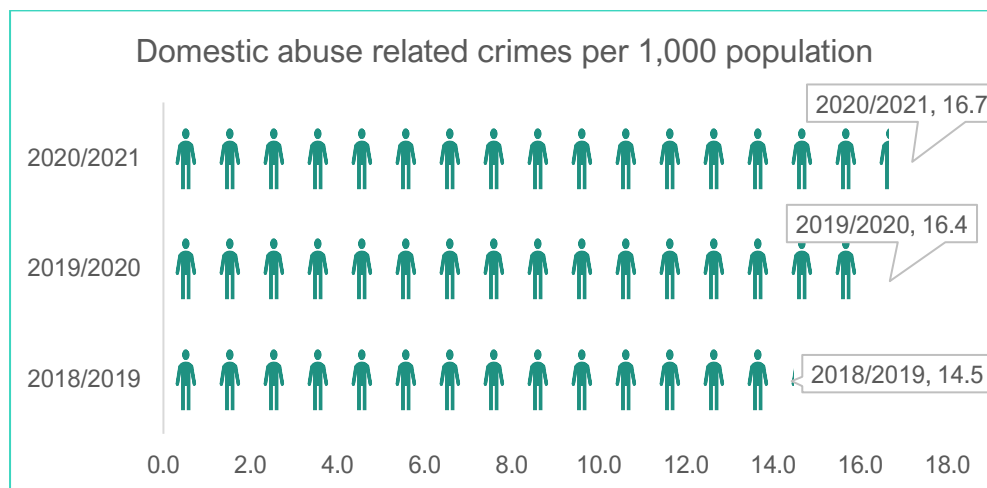


Figure 5: Rate of police recorded domestic abuse related crimes per 1,000



In Bristol, females over the age of 16 are 2.9 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 45.6 per 1000). See Figure 6 and Figure 7 for the rate of domestic abuse related offences by gender and age.

Figure 6: Rate of Domestic Abuse Related offences (crimes) 2020/21 by gender and age; Source: Avon & Somerset Constabulary, ONS Population Estimates



Figure 7: Relative Risk of Domestic Abuse Related Offences (Crimes) 2020/21 – Females vs Males by Age Group; Source: Avon & Somerset Constabulary, ONS Population Estimates

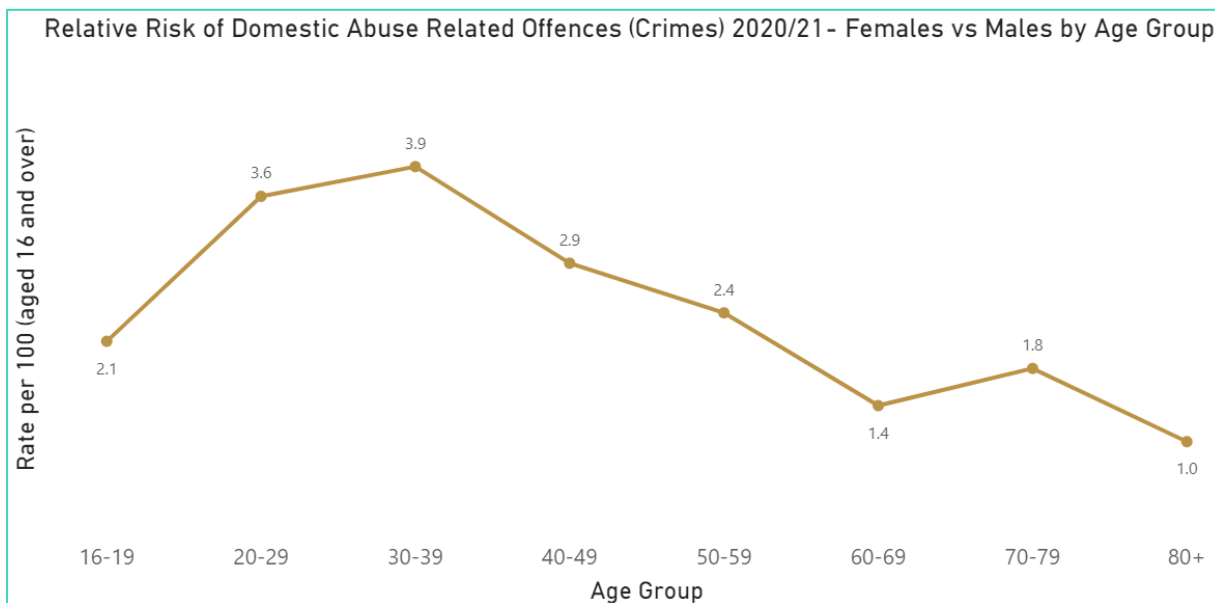


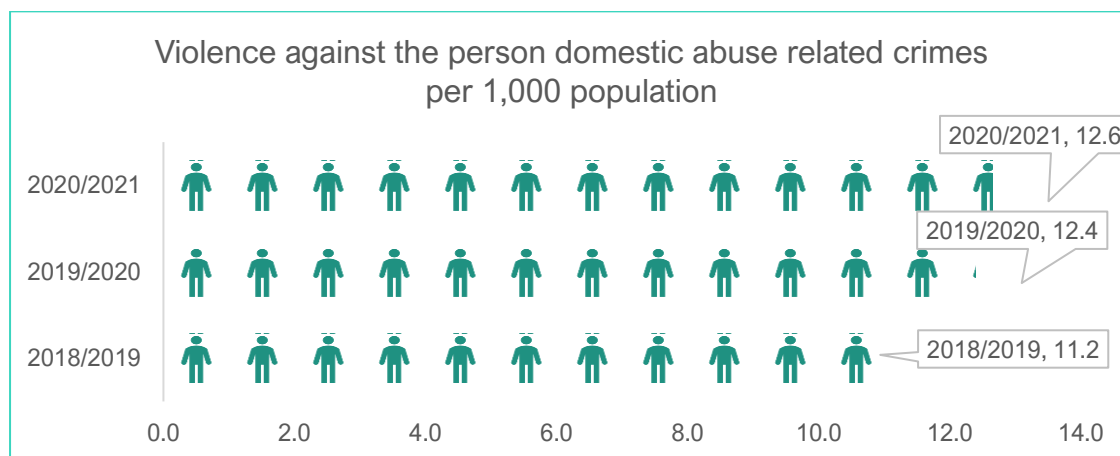
Figure 8: Violence against the person police recorded domestic abuse-related offences



Between 2018-19 and 2019-20, a significant increase in violence against the person domestic abuse-related offences was noted in Bristol City, from a low of 4,776 in 2018-19 to a high of 5,414 in 2020-21 (figure 8). This is in line with the force wide picture although as discussed above it may be related to changes in local systems and national recording guidance. During this 3-year period the percentage of all violence offences that were domestic abuse related experienced an increase, from 32.8% in 2018-19 up to 35.1% in 2020-21. This is in fact the lowest increase across the force area with all other Local Authorities realising a steeper increase.

The rate of violence against the person domestic abuse related offences has increased in Bristol City since 2018-19, peaking at 12.6 offences for 1,000 population in 2020-21 (figure 9). This is higher than the national and force wide rate of violence against the person which are both 10.4 per 1,000 of the population. It is also considerably different to the general trend across the South West region (8.4) which again highlights that due to the City context, Bristol is not comparable to the region generally.

Figure 9: Rate of police recorded violence against the person domestic abuse related crimes per 1,000



In each of the past three years, the most common domestic abuse offence types in Bristol City have been violence without injury, stalking and harassment and violence with injury. Public order offences also feature highly, as does criminal damage, with more than 400 such domestic abuse offences per year in 2020-21 (table 11).

Table 11: Domestic Abuse Crime type, Police Recorded Domestic Abuse Crimes

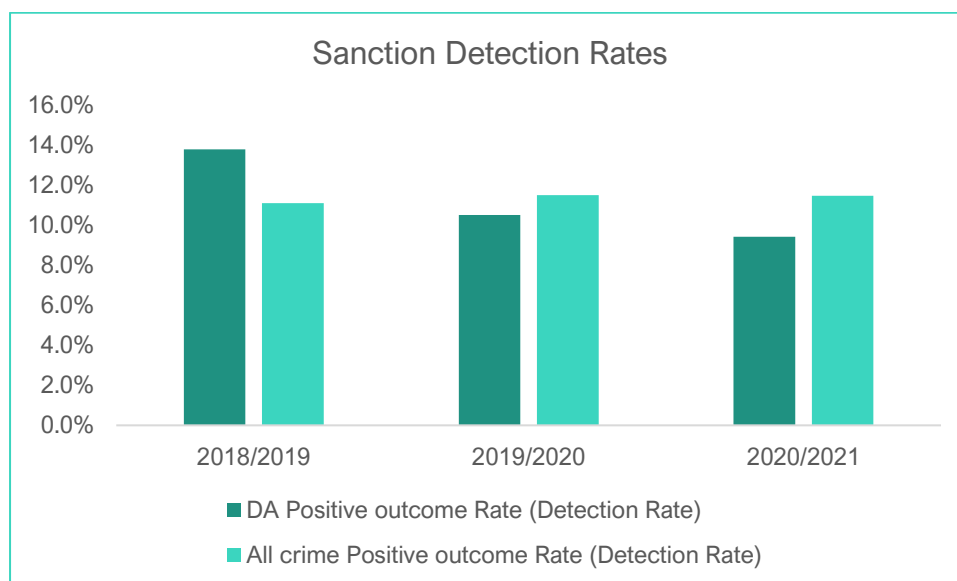
Domestic Abuse Crime Type	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Aggravated Vehicle Taking	2	5	1
Arson	4	8	5
Bicycle Theft	2	0	2
Burglary Residential / Dwelling	47	60	55
Criminal Damage	467	560	508
Homicide	2	1	0
Interfering with a Motor Vehicle	1	0	0
Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society	51	101	83
NFIB (Fraud)	0	1	2
Non Notifiable Offences	24	16	32
Other Sexual Offences	65	76	87
Other Theft	208	212	219
Possession of Drugs	3	10	7
Possession of Weapons	6	5	9
Public Order Offences	331	383	419
Rape	155	184	186
Reported Incidents of Rape	1	7	7
Robbery of Personal Property	15	14	21
Shoplifting	1	0	0
Stalking and Harassment	1387	1712	1891
Theft from a Motor Vehicle	2	2	2
Theft from the Person	4	8	29
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	30	42	33
Trafficking in Controlled Drugs	0	3	1
Violence with Injury	1413	1358	1260
Violence without Injury	1974	2236	2263

2.2.1.2 Police and Crime Outcomes

The official definition for a sanction detection is as follows:

'A sanctioned detection occurs when (1) a notifiable offence (crime) has been committed and recorded; (2) a suspect has been identified and is aware of the detection; (3) the CPS evidential test is satisfied; (4) the victim has been informed that the offence has been detected, and; (5) the suspect has been charged, reported for summons, or cautioned, been issued With a penalty notice for disorder or the offence has been taken into consideration when an offender is sentenced.'

Figure 10: Police and Crime outcomes, Sanction Detection Rates



Like the force area as a whole, during 2018-19, the sanction detection rate for domestic abuse offences exceeded that for all crimes, however, in the 2 years since then, the reverse has been true. The rate of domestic abuse sanction detections has decreased and was recorded as 9.4% in 2020-21. This is slightly below the force regional average where 9.9% of domestic abuse is detected

Table 12: Domestic Abuse Offence Outcomes of Domestic Abuse recorded offences

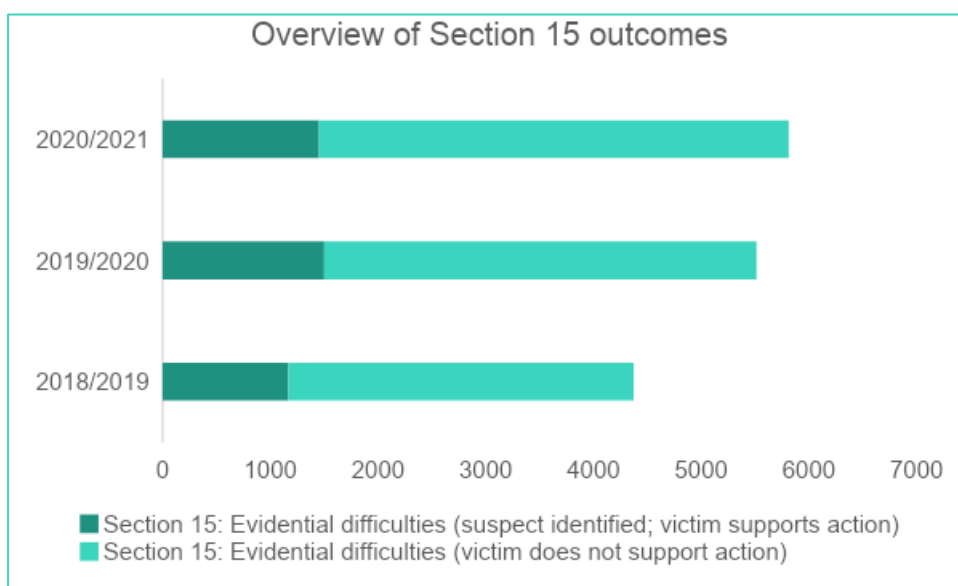
Domestic Abuse Offence Outcomes	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
DA Positive outcome Rate (Detection Rate)	13.8%	10.5%	9.4%
All crime Positive outcome Rate (Detection Rate)	11.1%	11.5%	11.5%
DA Arrests	1962	1858	1725
DA Charged/summonsed	726	606	531
Out of court disposal: Cautions	94	99	98
Out of court disposal: Other	33	31	42

Section 15/16 outcomes refer to instances where a suspect has been identified but there are evidentiary difficulties that prevent further action. In these instances, the victim may support action being taken, or may not.

The total number of section 15 outcomes for domestic abuse offences in Bristol City has increased since 2018-19. The proportion classified as evidential difficulties in cases where the victim supports action has reduced slightly, from approximately 27% in 2018-19 to 25% in 2020-21 of all section 15 outcomes.

N.B Data on the number of evidence led prosecutions is currently unavailable.

Figure 11: Overview of Section 15 outcomes for domestic abuse recorded offences



The table below highlights how many of the section 15/16 outcomes related to the victim not supporting action as this helps to understand the capacity of support that may be required to ensure victims and survivors feel empowered to provide evidence to support a prosecution. Overall, 75% of section 15/16 outcomes are instances where victims have not supported a prosecution. This is in line with the force wide perspective.

Table 13: Section 15/16 outcomes related to the victim not supporting action

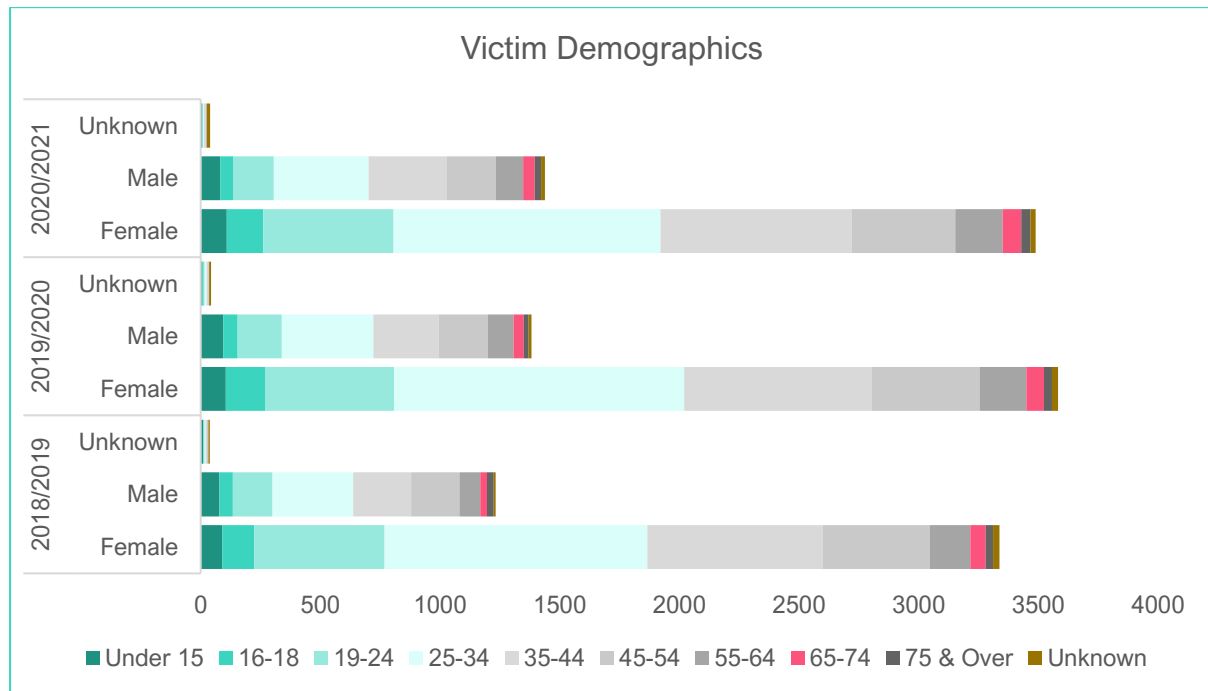
	% of all Section 16s listed as: "Evidential difficulties (victim does not support action)"		
	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Avon & Somerset (Force)	69.5%	69.1%	72.3%
Bristol City area	73.3%	72.8%	75.0%

2.2.1.3 Demographics

In each of the past 3-years, female victims have consistently accounted for approximately 70% of all domestic abuse victims in Bristol City. This is generally in line with our estimated prevalence in the previous section which suggested around 67% of victims are likely to be female based on the sex demographic across Bristol.

The 25-to-34-year age banding forms the largest age group of domestic abuse victims, accounting for 31% of the total in the most recent year.

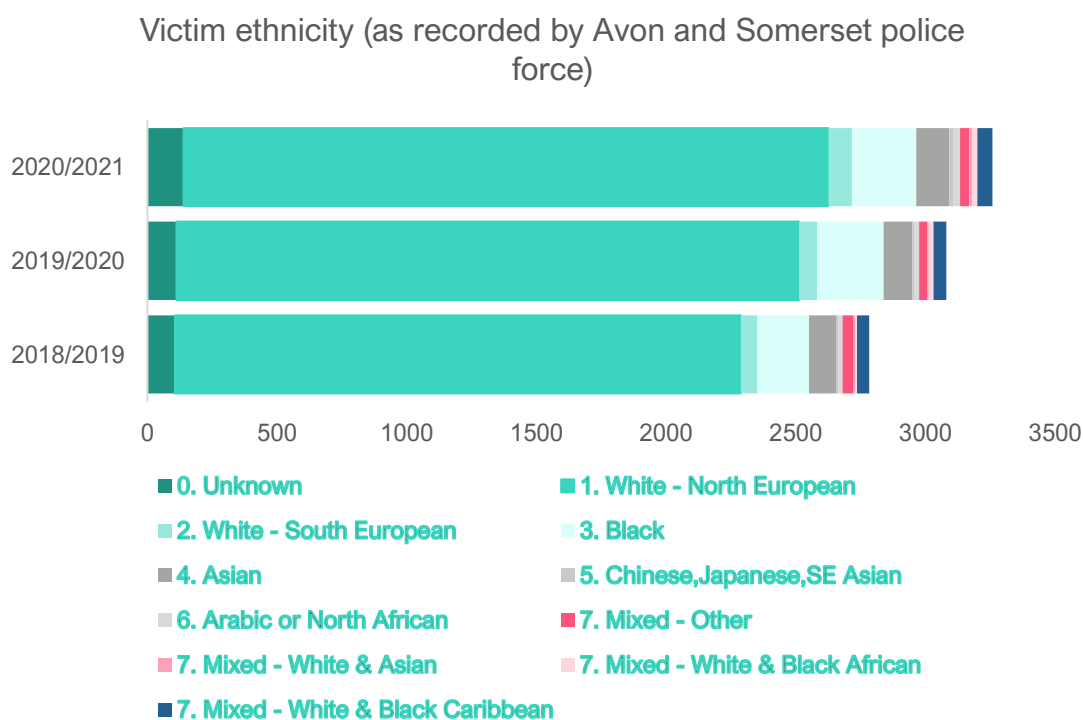
Figure 12: Domestic abuse victim demographics recorded by police



Ethnicity data has not been recorded for approximately 37% of domestic abuse victims in Bristol City in the past 3 years.

Where known, and as defined by Avon and Somerset police force, the largest proportion of victims have been defined as ‘White – North European’. The next largest group have been defined as ‘Black’, followed by ‘Asian’.

Figure 13: Domestic abuse victim ethnicity recorded by police



2.2.1.4 Domestic Abuse Victims/Survivors in Probation

Probation report as of 14th September 2021, 62 victims/survivors of domestic abuse were identified within the offender cohort. No further information regarding self-disclosures, offences or referrals was available for this group. This is an important finding as national evidence has highlighted female offenders are likely to have experienced domestic abuse. We also know that probation cohorts are disproportionately male, which as we explore below is the same for South Gloucestershire and Bristol PDU. This is a considerably small cohort of victims, but their needs are likely to be more complex.

2.2.2 Probation and Perpetrators

This section is based on data collected from the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) as this is the only way of collecting the data. As such it will include data from the South Gloucestershire Local Authority area as well as Bristol.

2.2.2.1 Domestic Abuse Perpetrators

The Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) identified 498 perpetrators of domestic abuse within the cohort. The outcomes of the risk assessments indicate that the majority (62%) of the perpetrators identified through probation are of medium risk, with a further quarter (29%) as 'high' risk. It is not surprising that most of the perpetrators accessing probation pose a considerable risk to victims as they will have been convicted of an offence, which from the police and courts data we know does not happen routinely due to a number of factors.

Table 14: Risk assessment of perpetrators identified in probation

Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse	Bristol and South Gloucester PDU (current)
Total number of perpetrators of domestic abuse identified	498
Total number of self-disclosures by offenders of perpetrating domestic abuse	Not possible to establish
Total number of Spousal Assault Risk Assessments (SARAs) completed within last 12 months (15 th September 2020 – 14 th September 2021)	<i>Figures for whole offender cohort, not specific to DA perpetrators</i>
Total number of Spousal Assault Risk Assessments (SARAs) completed within last 12 months (15 th September 2020 – 14 th September 2021)	385
Total number of SARAs assessed as 'Low'	36
Total number of SARAs assessed as 'Medium'	237
Total number of SARAs assessed as 'High'	112

2.2.2.2 Pre-Sentence Requirement's and Recommendations

This section considers the pre-sentence reports probation write in respect of interventions for perpetrators of domestic abuse. The domestic abuse perpetrator programme Building Better Relationships (BBR) was not recommended in a significant number of cases. As such there is additional exploration required to understand what interventions perpetrators are receiving through probation, and whether there are any barriers faced in accessing programmes to change abusive behaviour.

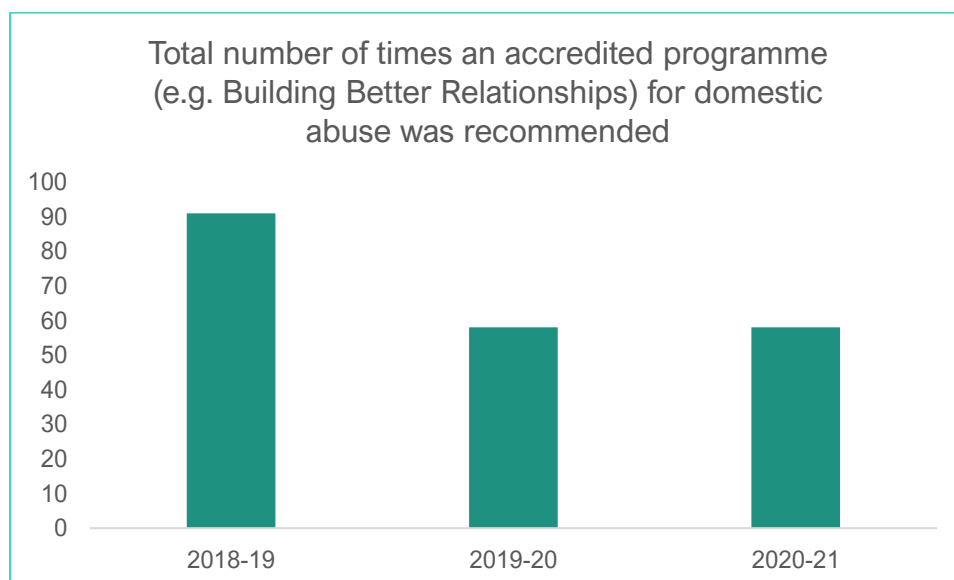
Table 15: Pre-sentence reports and recommendations

PSRs and Recommendations	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Total number of pre-sentence reports (PSRs) where domestic abuse was a feature	Not possible to establish		
Total number of times an accredited programme (e.g. Building Better Relationships) for domestic abuse was recommended	91	58	58
<i>Please list the accredited programmes below and how many times each was recommended:</i>	<i>Figures for whole offender cohort, not specific to DA perpetrators</i>		
Thinking Skills Programme	60	74	37
Horizon/iHorizon	30	30	26
Total number of positive completions of accredited programmes	61	79	29
Total number of neutral completions of accredited programmes	53	54	19

Total number of negative completions of accredited programmes	47	50	75
Total number of times a Rehabilitation Activity Requirement (RAR) for domestic abuse was recommended	Not possible to establish		
Total number of times a Rehabilitation Activity Requirement (RAR) was recommended	30	30	26
<i>Not specific to DA perpetrators</i>			
Total number of times a restrictive requirement was recommended for domestic abuse perpetrators	Not possible to establish		
<i>Please list the restrictive requirements below and how many times each was recommended:</i>	<i>Figures for whole offender cohort, not specific to DA perpetrators</i>		
Electronic Monitoring / Curfew	251	226	203
Prohibited Activity	1	0	0
Exclusion	3	0	0

Between 2018-19 and 2020-21, the number of times an accredited programme for domestic abuse was recommended has reduced, from a high of 91 in 2018-19 to a low of 58 in 2020-21, which could be due to the pandemic. The overall proportion of negative completions of accredited programmes has risen during this period too, accounting for 61% of completions in 2020-21. This is the highest level of negative completions across the three Avon and Somerset PDU's.

Figure 14: Total number of times an accredited programme for domestic abuse was recommended



2.2.2.3 ***Criminogenic Needs of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators***

Building on the point above in relation to barriers perpetrators may face in relation to changing their behaviour, data was collected on the needs assessed. The 498 DA perpetrators identified through probation 481 had a needs assessment completed with

highlighted their wider needs. Of these, the most common criminogenic needs identified were thinking and behaviour (99%), relationships (93%) and lifestyle (63%). In terms of more practical needs, there was a high level of problematic substance use among probation DA perpetrators with a number requiring support around drugs (47%) and alcohol (55%) (table 16). We know that the use of drugs and alcohol, although not the cause of domestic abuse, can considerably increase the risk of harm.

Table 16: Needs of domestic abuse perpetrators as assessed by probation

Total number of domestic abuse perpetrators with each of the following offending related needs:	Bristol and South Gloucester PDU (current)
Total Number of DA Perps with a needs assessment completed	481
Accommodation	231 (48%)
Education, training and employment	158 (33%)
Relationships	446 (93%)
Lifestyle	301 (63%)
Drugs misuse	227 (47%)
Alcohol misuse	265 (55%)
Thinking and behaviour	476 (99%)
Attitudes	400 (83%)
Other (Finance)	179 (37%)
Other (Emotional Wellbeing)	327 (68%)
Total number of domestic abuse perpetrators in an Approved Premises	15 (3%)

Around half of domestic abuse perpetrators within probation experienced challenges around accommodation (48%) and finances (37%).

2.2.2.4 *Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Under IOM/MAPPA*

As of 14th September 2021, 12% of the domestic abuse perpetrator cohort were part of the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) scheme, and 112 were being managed under multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA). Of those under MAPPA, 76 were under MAPPA level one, with 10 under MAPPA level two. No domestic abuse perpetrators were being managed under MAPPA level three (table 17).

Table 17: Management of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators

Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse Under IOM/MAPPA	Bristol and South Gloucester PDU (current)
Total number of domestic abuse perpetrators who are part of IOM scheme	58 (12%)
Total number of domestic abuse perpetrators under MAPPA	112 (22%)
Domestic abuse perpetrators under MAPPA level one	76 (15%)

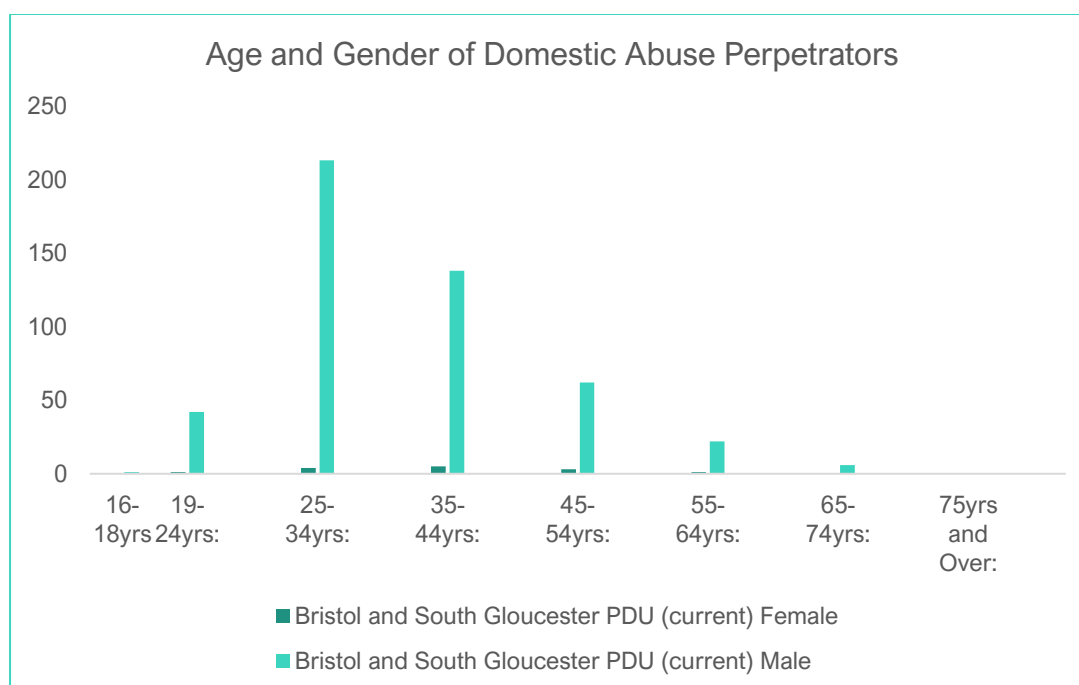
Domestic abuse perpetrators under MAPPA level two	10 (2%)
Domestic abuse perpetrators under MAPPA level three	0 (0%)

2.2.2.5 Demographics of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators

N.B. Although probation do currently collect gender information for gender identity (Non-Binary and Trans-Gender), they are currently awaiting an update to the reporting system to enable reporting on these figures.

Most domestic abuse perpetrators in the probation cohort were, as discussed above, male, accounting for 97% of the total. In terms of age a significant proportion (44%) of perpetrators were aged between 25 and 34 years (figure 15).

Figure 15: Age and gender of domestic abuse perpetrators at Bristol and South Glos PDU



Where known, the sexual identity of the majority of domestic abuse perpetrators was stated as 'heterosexual/straight', accounting for 79% (n=391) of perpetrators. Bristol and South Gloucestershire PDU have the highest number of LGBT offenders over the force area with 2% identifying as gay, lesbian or bisexual (table 18). However, 20% of cases did not have a recorded sexual identity.

Table 18: Sexual identity of domestic abuse perpetrators in Bristol and South Glos PDU

Sexual Identity of Domestic Abuse Perpetrators	Bristol and South Gloucestershire PDU (current)
Heterosexual/Straight	391
Gay/Lesbian	6

Bisexual	3
Other/Unknown	0
Unknown	98

Similarly to sexuality data, the data around disability is unknown in a high proportion of cases (58%). Of those where data has been collected it indicates that over half (42% n=210) of domestic abuse perpetrators have some kind of disability which is higher than the general population (table 19).

Table 19: Identified disabled domestic abuse perpetrators in Bristol and South Glos PDU

Year	Bristol and South Gloucester PDU (current)
Disabled	210
Not Disabled	-
Unknown	288

N.B. It is not currently possible to accurately report the number of persons that are not disabled due to an update required for the Probation case management system. So, unless a disability is recorded, it is unknown if the person is disabled or not.

The ethnicity of the majority of known DA perpetrators was listed as 'White or White British', accounting for 78% of the total.

Table 20 Recorded ethnicity of domestic abuse perpetrators

Year	Perpetrator Ethnicity - Bristol and South Gloucestershire PDU (current)
White or White British	389
Asian or Asian British	9
Black or Black British	43
Mixed or dual heritage	26
Gypsy/Roma/Traveller	2
Other/unknown	29

More than half (54%) of the perpetrator cohort had an employment status listed as 'unemployed' as of 14th September 2021. Around 31% were listed as being in full or part time employment which is positive. This finding in align with the criminogenic needs identified in which 37% required support around finances although we could estimate this may be higher if 54% are not employed.

Table 21: Recorded employment status of perpetrators

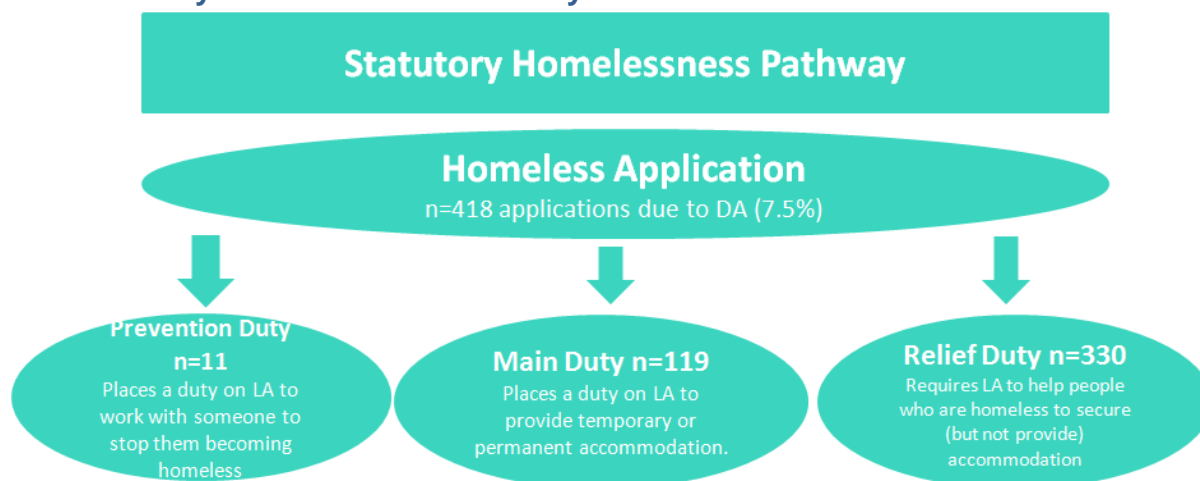
Employment Status	Employment Status - Bristol and South Gloucestershire PDU (current)
Employed - Full Time/Part Time	154

Unemployed	271
Student	3
Looking After Family/Home	0
Retired	4
Economically Inactive/Long or Short Term Ill/Other Inactive	30
Unknown	36

2.2.3 Housing

2.2.3.1 *Statutory homelessness service*

The statutory Homelessness Pathway



This information in this section has been provided by Bristol City Council housing options and advice. There were 5,508 homeless applications in total in 2020/21, 7.5% (n=418) of which were households with domestic abuse (table 22). This is slightly less than the national average would suggest in which 1 in 11 households (8.7%) recorded domestic abuse as their main reason for being homeless or threatened with homelessness⁹. This would also mean, based on our estimated prevalence presented in the last section based on the Crime Survey for England and Wales, that only around 2% of the estimated 19,960 victims in Bristol City will present as homeless.

Whilst there were 418 homeless applications made in 2020/21 for households experiencing domestic abuse, there were 460 households which were found to be owed one of the three homeless duties. This may be due to decisions being made on applications which were submitted in the previous year.

⁹ Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (October 2020)

Of domestic abuse victims presenting as homeless, the majority of applicants (n=243, 58%) were single people presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse and a further 175 of those presenting with domestic abuse had children. Numbers of applicants experiencing domestic abuse has increased over the past 3 years as has the overall number of applicants. This means the proportion of applicants who present due to domestic abuse has remained at approximately between 7 and 8%.

Table 22: Homelessness applications to Bristol City Council

		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Homelessness applications	Number of all single/single adult households presenting as homeless	2837	3838	4165
	Number of single/single adult households presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse	147	170	243
	Number all of households with children presenting as homeless	1354	1629	1343
	Number all of households with children presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse	154	163	175

In 2020/21, 6% of all single/single adult household applicants were experiencing domestic abuse compared to 13% of applicants in households with children were experiencing domestic abuse. 243 single adults were homeless with domestic abuse as a factor in 2020/21, an increase from 170 in 2019/20 and 147 in 2018/19. Although the majority of applicants with domestic abuse as a primary need were single people, the data highlights domestic abuse is actually more common as a cause for homelessness for families (i.e. where applicants do have children).

Figure 16: Number of single adult household presenting as homeless and experiencing domestic abuse

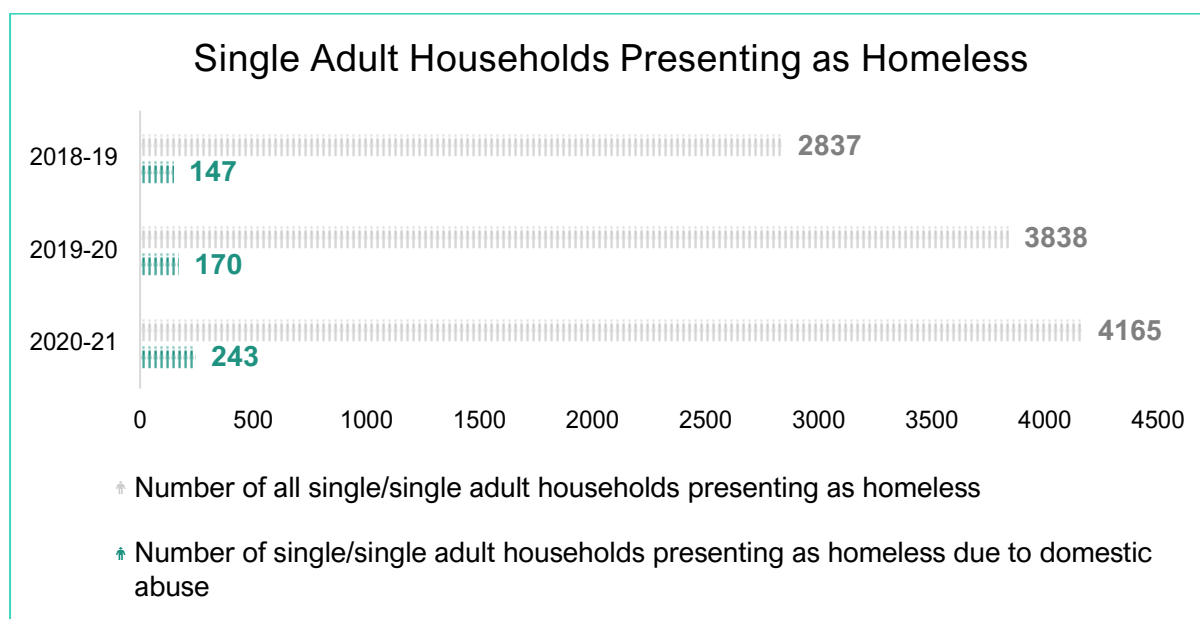
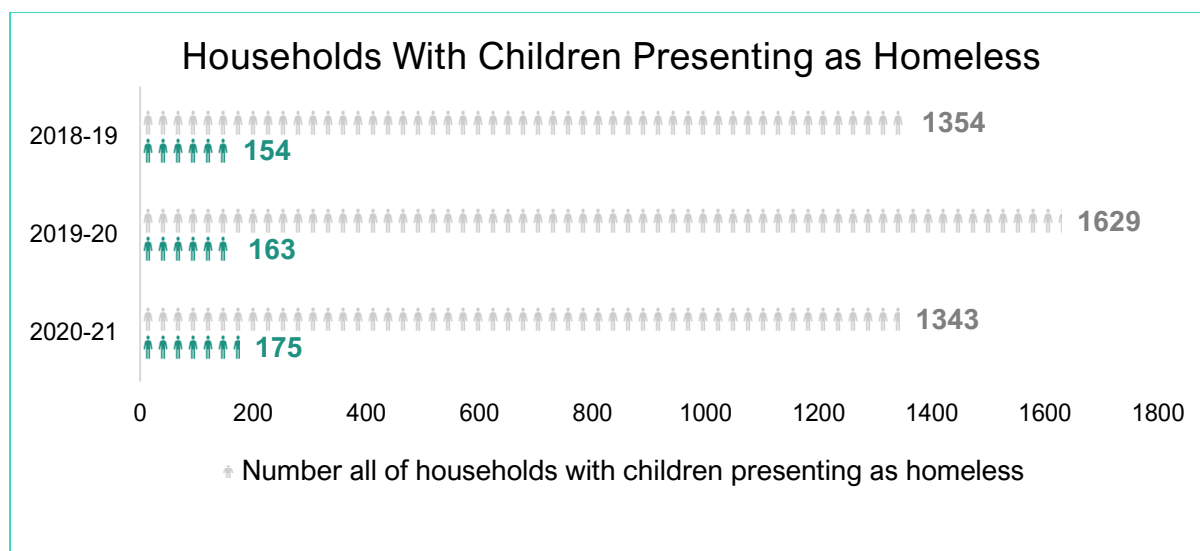
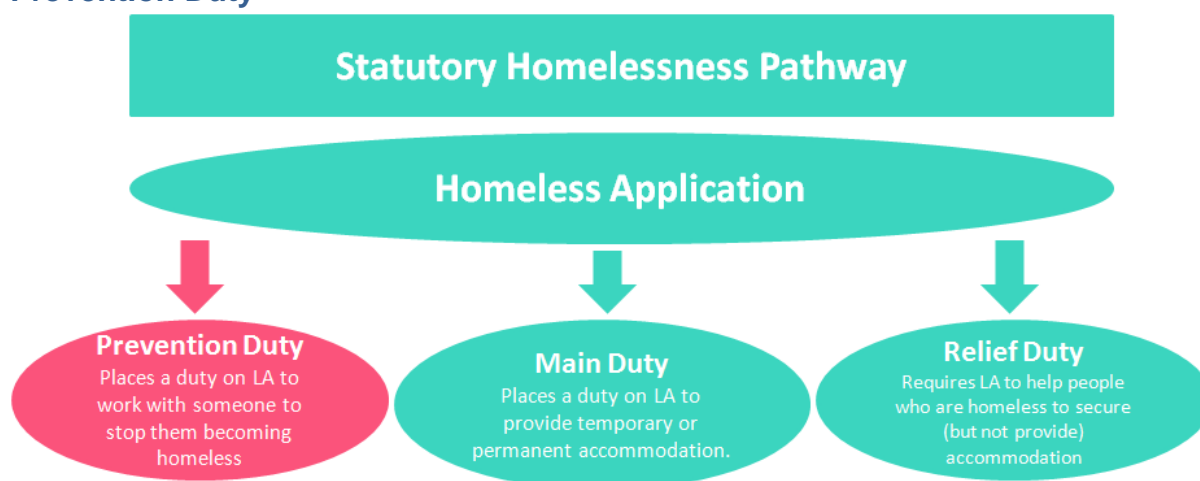


Figure 17: Number of households with children presenting as homeless and experiencing domestic abuse



N.B information regarding out of area applicants is unavailable.

Prevention Duty



Only 11 homeless applicants experiencing domestic abuse were owed prevention duty in 2020/21 out of 477 total prevention duties in this time period, and thus supported to prevent them from becoming homeless. Therefore, 2% of all prevention duties were for domestic abuse victims/ survivors. In 2018/19, 22 prevention duties were owed for domestic abuse victims/ survivors compared to the total of 588 prevention duties. This means that in 2018/19, 4% of prevention were for domestic abuse victims or survivors. Therefore, in 2020/21 prevention duties for domestic abuse victims/ survivors decreased as a proportion since 2018/19.

Overall although prevention duties are seemingly reducing in the case of domestic abuse, this could be positive as we see an increase in relief duties over the same period. Around half of those owed a prevention duty had children and half did not.

Table 23: Homeless applicants experiencing domestic abuse owed prevention duty

		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Prevention duty owed	Number of all single/single adult households prevention duty owed	295	294	272
	Number of single/single adult households prevention duty owed due to domestic abuse	14	13	5
	Number all of households with children prevention duty owed	293	295	205
	Number all of households with children prevention duty owed due to domestic abuse	8	13	6

In 2020/21, only two DA victims/survivors secured accommodation at the end of their prevention duty prior to 56 days. The most common outcome is that victims become homeless during the 56 days and the relief duty applies. Of those in 2020/21 who did secure accommodation, only one was sustained for over 6 months with the other one having lost contact.

Table 24: Outcomes of Prevention Duty End

Outcomes of Prevention Duty End (56 days elapsed) for DA victims/survivors	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Secured accommodation 6+ months	0	1	1
Contact lost	1	4	1
Other not known	0	0	0
Homeless at end of duty (relief owed)	1	3	0

Of the two domestic abuse victims/survivors that secured accommodation following prevention duty in 2020/21; one was placed within the social rented sector whilst the other in a privately rented property.

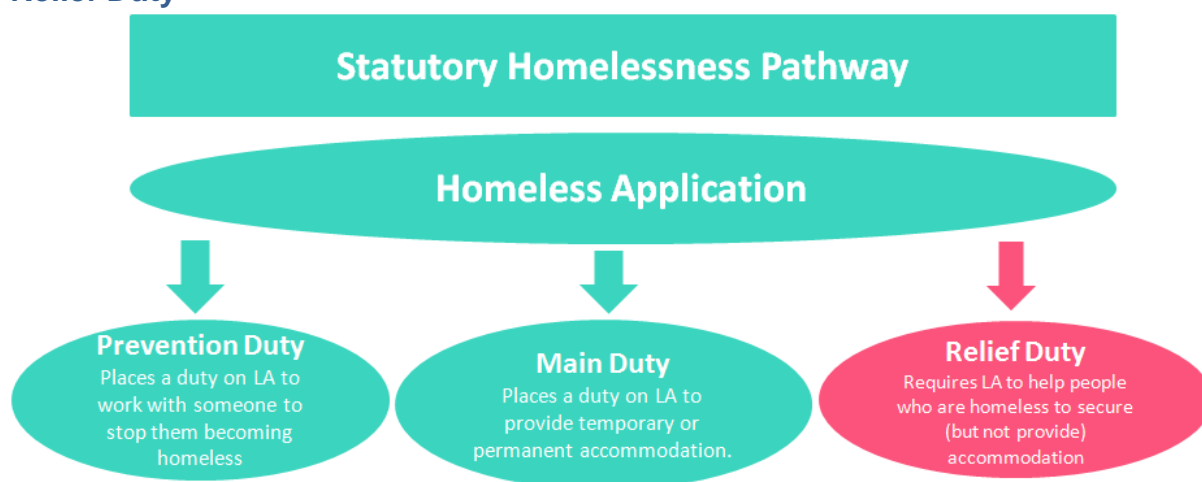
The table below (table 25) provides additional context comparable to the wider prevention duty outcomes where domestic abuse was not the primary need. As there were only two domestic abuse victims who did secure accommodation the data is not directly comparable. However, it is interesting to note that one victim had children and the other did not. This could be indicative of the differential outcomes as those with children may be more likely to be eligible for social housing.

Table 25: Wider prevention duty outcomes where domestic abuse was not the primary need

Prevention Duty Outcomes 2020/21	Total secured accommodation duty end	Private rented sector	Council or registered provider tenancy	Social rented or supported housing	Hostel or shared temporary accom	Staying with friends or family	DA refuge	Other / not reported
Number of all single/single adult households	64	32	9	17	0	3	0	3

DA single/single adult households	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number all of households with children	68	45	1	21	0	0	0	1
DA households with children	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

Relief Duty



In 2020/21 the majority (79%, n=330) of domestic abuse victims/ survivors were owed relief duty out of 2,311 relief duties in total and were supported to secure accommodation. This means in 2020/21 14% of all relief duties were for domestic abuse victims/ survivors. In contrast, 2018/19 182 relief duties were for domestic abuse victims/ survivors, equating to 12% of the total number of relief duties. Therefore, relief duties for domestic abuse victims/ survivors in Bristol have increased both in volume and proportion (figure 18).

Figure 18: Relief Duty owed to domestic abuse victims/survivors



In 2020/21, 53% of all domestic abuse victims owed Relief Duty had children and 47% did not have children. This finding has been consistent for the past 3 years.

Table 26: Households owed relief duty

		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Relief duty owed	Number of <i>all</i> single/single adult households relief duty owed	885	1235	1774
	Number of single/single adult households relief duty owed due to domestic abuse	84	96	155
	Number <i>all</i> of households with children relief duty owed	611	707	537
	Number <i>all</i> of households with children relief duty owed due to domestic abuse	98	112	175

In 2020/21, 35 domestic abuse victims/survivors secured accommodation following a relief duty (table 27). There was a small increase, however, in the number of domestic abuse victims/ survivors who withdrew their applications.

Table 27: Outcomes of relief duty end

Outcomes of Relief Duty End (56 days elapsed) for DA victims/survivors	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Has suitable accommodation for at least six months	32	41	35
Withdraws their application	17	14	25
Ceases to be eligible	0	2	1
Applicant has deliberately and unreasonably refused to take a step in their plan	0	0	0
Applicant has refused an offer of accommodation, including a final offer	0	1	0
Becomes homeless (relief duty applies)	1	0	0
Becomes homeless intentionally	0	0	0
Unknown/other	0	0	0

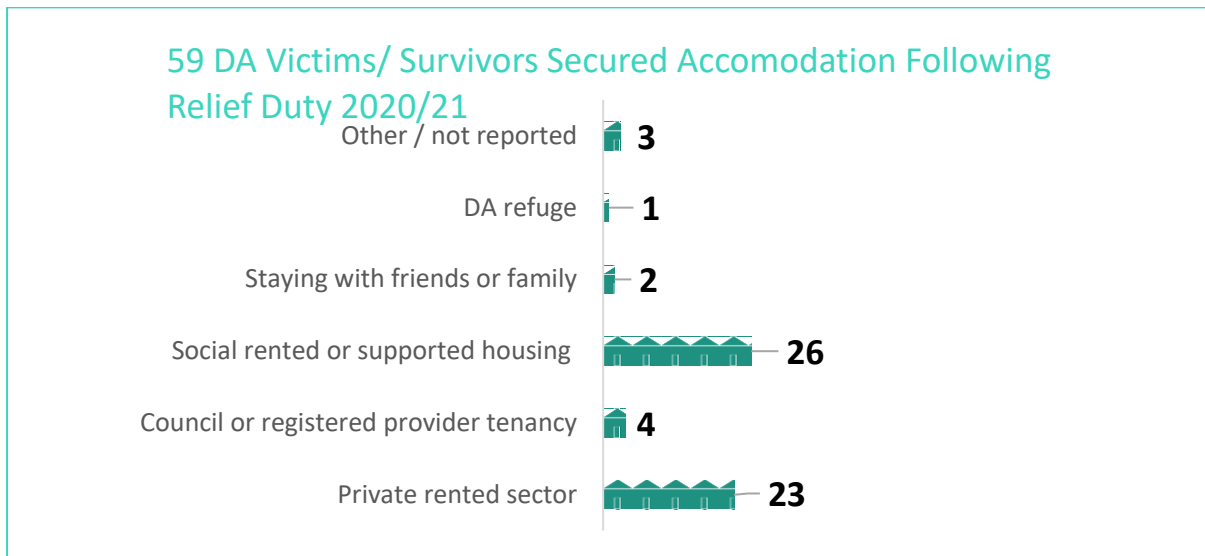
In 2020/21, 119 domestic abuse victims/survivors progressed to Main Duty Owed following a Prevention Duty (table 28). A small increase on the previous 2 years. 23 domestic abuse victims/survivors also secured accommodation once 56 days elapsed.

Table 28: Further outcomes of relief duty end for domestic abuse victims/survivors

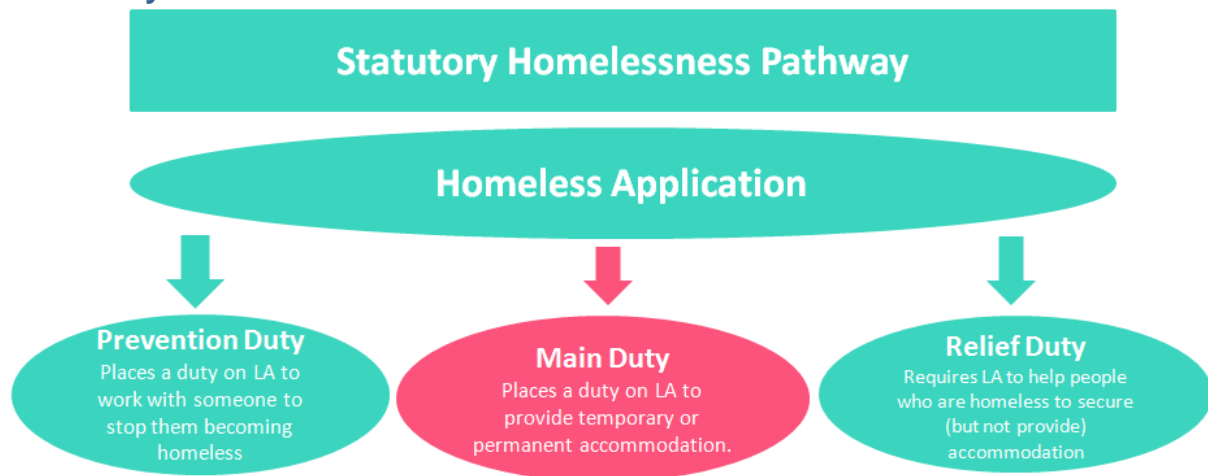
Outcomes of Relief Duty End (56 days elapsed) for DA victims/survivors	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
56 days elapsed (main duty owed)	72	101	119
Secured accommodation 6+ months	18	21	23
Contact lost	8	12	14
56 days elapsed (not priority need or intentionally homeless)	0	2	11
Other not known	0	0	0
56 days elapsed (Authority not yet made a decision)	0	0	0

In 2020/21, 59 domestic abuse victims/ survivors secured accommodation following a relief duty in total.

Figure 19: Domestic abuse victims/ survivors secured accommodation following relief duty 2020/21

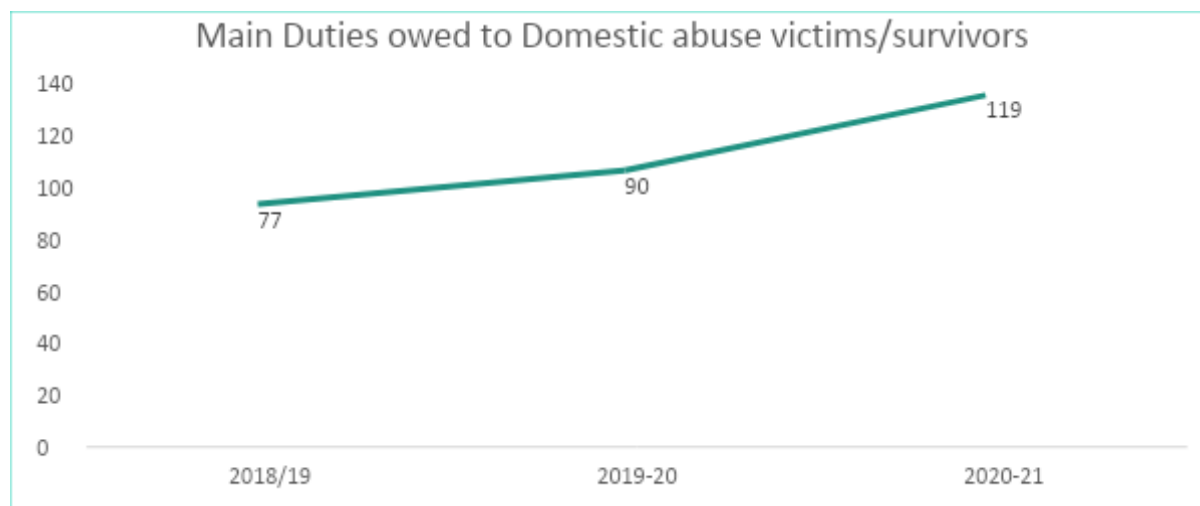


Main Duty



In total 837 main duties were owed in 2020/21, 119 of which were for domestic abuse victims/ survivors (figure 20) and were thus provided with temporary or permanent accommodation. This means in 2020/21 14% of all main duties were for domestic abuse victims/survivors. The proportion of main duties that were domestic abuse has remained between 14 and 15% for the past three years.

Figure 20: Main duties owed to domestic abuse victims/survivors



64 of the 119 domestic abuse victims/survivors with a main duty owed had children (table 29).

Table 29: Households owed Main Duty

		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Main Duty Owed	Number of <i>all</i> single/single adult households main duty owed	107	292	487
	Number of single/single adult households main duty owed due to domestic abuse	16	22	55
	Number <i>all</i> of households with children main owed	405	496	350
	Number <i>all</i> of households with children main duty owed due to domestic abuse	61	68	64

2.2.3.2 *Homelessness Service Users Experiencing Domestic Abuse*

Overall, 76% of homeless applicants experiencing domestic abuse were female (334). Our prevalence estimates in the previous section suggest that around 32% (103) of victims are likely to be male which would mean they are underrepresented within the homelessness pathway, although only by 8% which makes male victims of domestic abuse with housing needs the most visible in Bristol compared to all other Local Authority areas across the force region.

N.B data on age is unavailable.

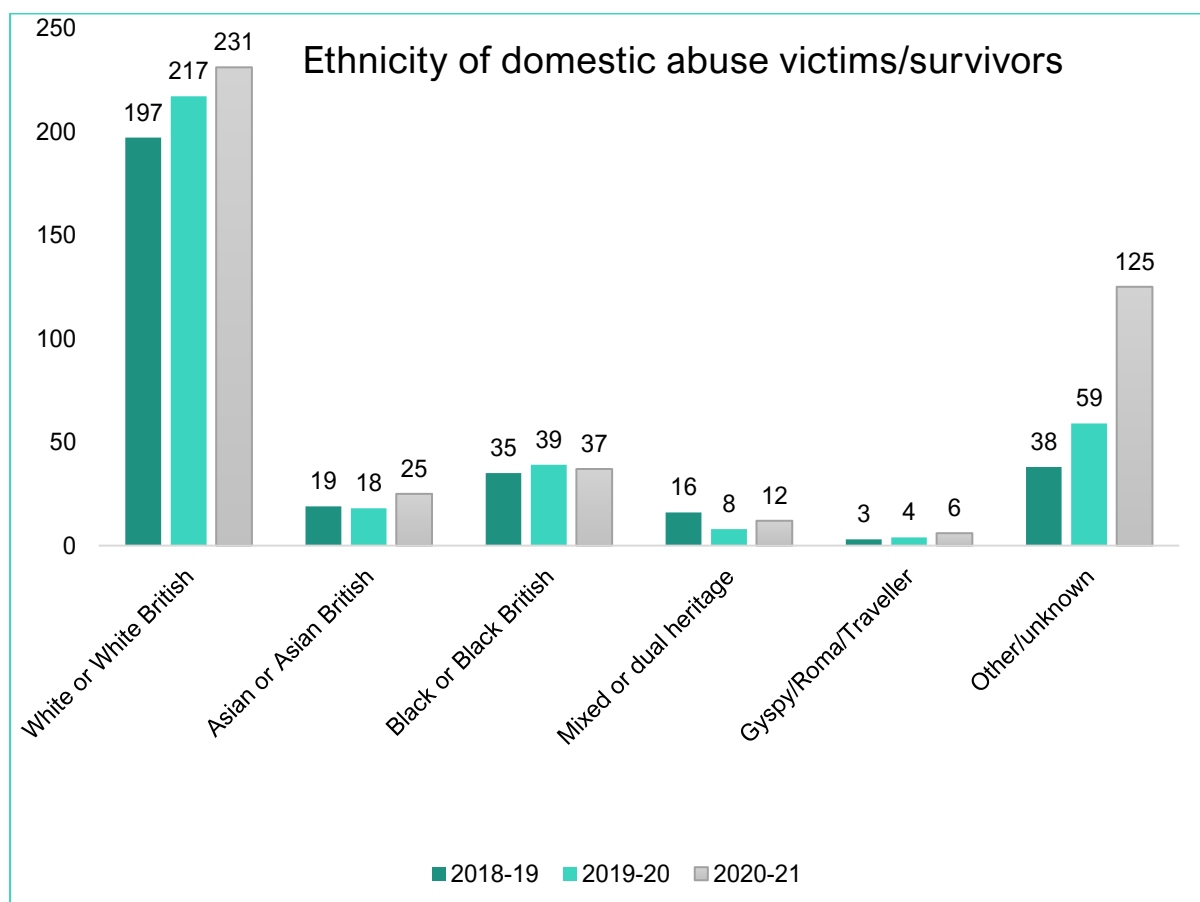
The majority of domestic abuse victims/survivors were heterosexual, five were Gay/Lesbian and a large proportion were unknown.

Table 30: Recorded sexual identity of homeless applicants experiencing domestic abuse

Applicants who are DA victims/survivors	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Heterosexual/Straight	203	243	288
Gay/Lesbian	2	5	5
Bisexual	0	0	0
Other/Unknown	9	9	4
Unknown	90	83	139

Overall, 53% of victims/survivors were White or White British. Despite the volume of White or White British increasing, the proportion has decreased. In 2018/19 64% were White or White British. Black or Black British victims/survivors have made up approximately 11% of all victims/survivors (however this had dropped to 8% in 2020/21). Asian or Asian British make up 6% and Mixed Dual Heritage 3%. Given the population in Bristol is only 23.5% Black, Asian & minoritized communities, the number of Black, Asian & minoritised victims presenting as homeless through the statutory service is double. There may be some additional work required to understand this, and whether this is due to survivors coming from out of area or if Black, Asian & minoritised victims are more likely to become homeless as a result of domestic abuse.

Figure 21: Recorded ethnicity of homeless applicants experiencing domestic abuse



In 2020/21, 93 victims/survivors were employed (the highest in three years). 115 were unemployed, 95 economically inactive and five were retired.

Table 31: Recorded employment status of homeless applicants experiencing domestic abuse

Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Employed - Full Time/Part Time	63	68	93
Unemployed	28 (7 listed as not claiming benefits)	45 (13 listed as not claiming benefits)	115 (24 listed as not claiming benefits)
Student	9	9	5
Looking After Family/Home	62	70	64
Retired	0	5	5
Economically Inactive/Long or Short Term Ill/Other Inactive	83	78	95
Unknown	63	69	60

2.2.3.3 *Home choice*

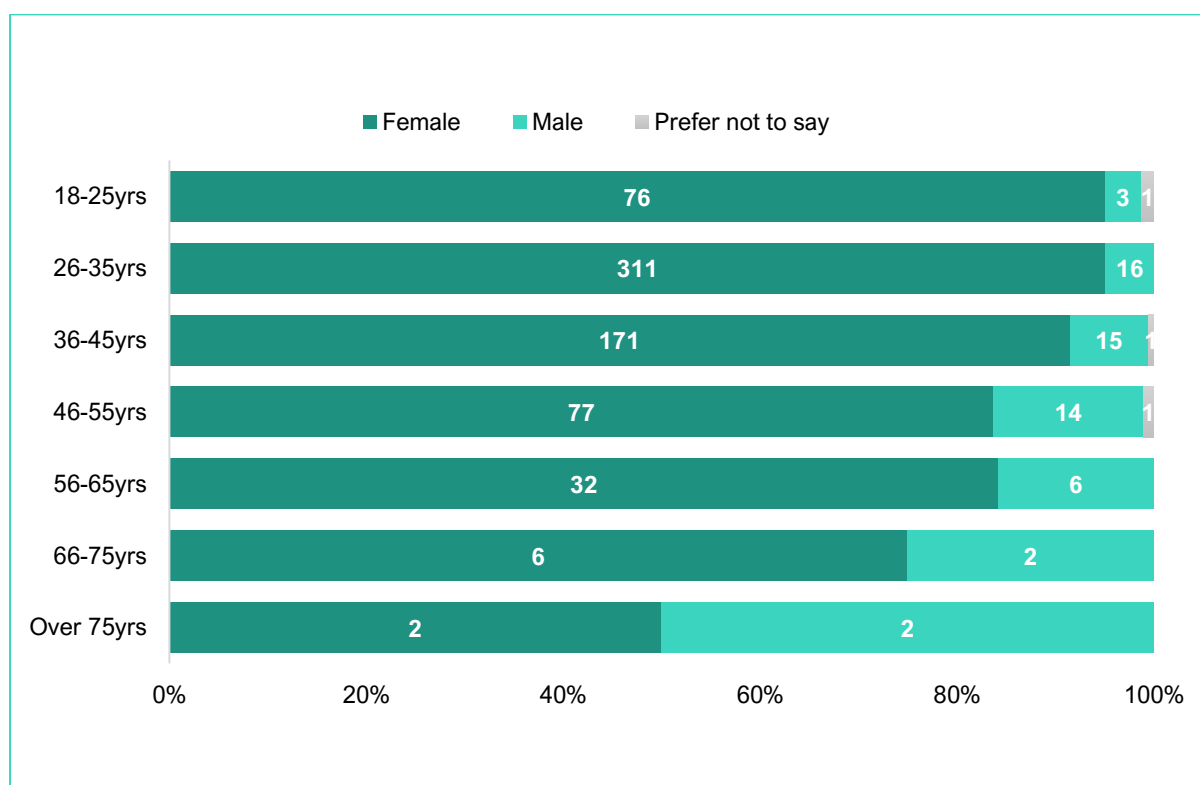
There were 694 people on the housing register (Home Choice) in total in April 2021 (table 32). In April 2021, 209 applicants were single people presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse and a further 485 of those presenting with domestic abuse had children. Numbers of applicants experiencing domestic abuse has increased over the past three years for both single persons and those with children who are victims/survivors of domestic abuse.

Table 32: Household type of Home Choice applications

Year	April 2019	April 2020	April 2021
Applications from households who are victims of DV Number of <i>all</i> single/single adult households presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse	153	176	209
Number all of households with children presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse	366	392	485
Total	519	568	694

As at 09/08/2021 the total number of applicants on the housing register is 15,866. The number of applicants on the housing register can change on a daily basis. The following numbers are taken from 9th August 2021. Comparative figures for previous years broken down by equality groups are not available. Of those on the register 92% were female and the majority were aged 26 to 45 years old.

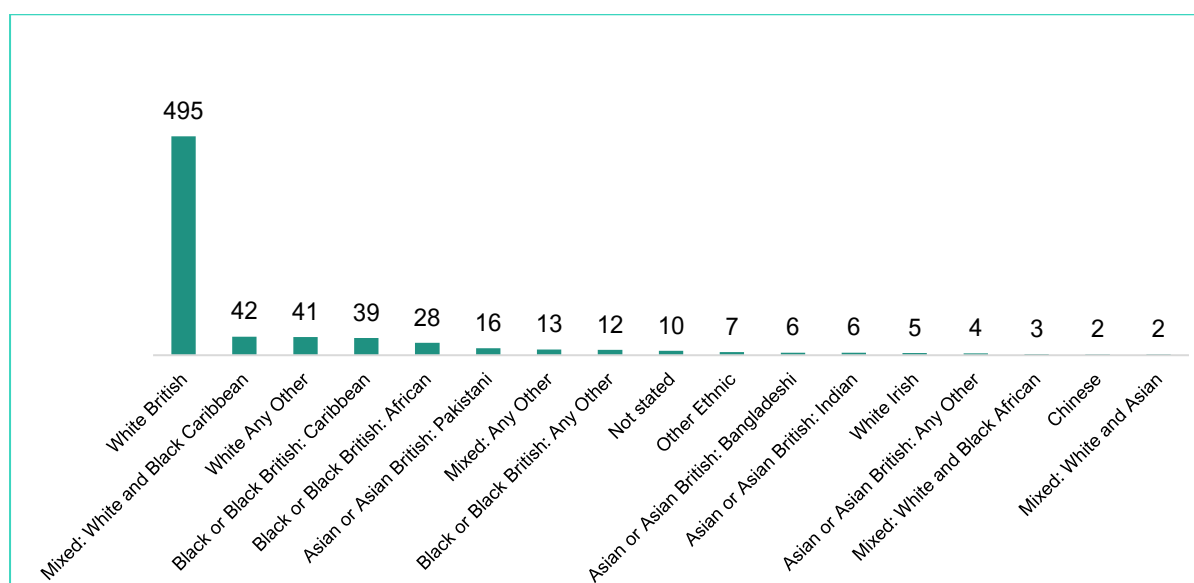
Figure 22: Home choice applicants by age and gender (August 2021)



As of 9th August 2021, 43% of domestic abuse victims/survivors who were Home Choice Bristol applicants were disabled.

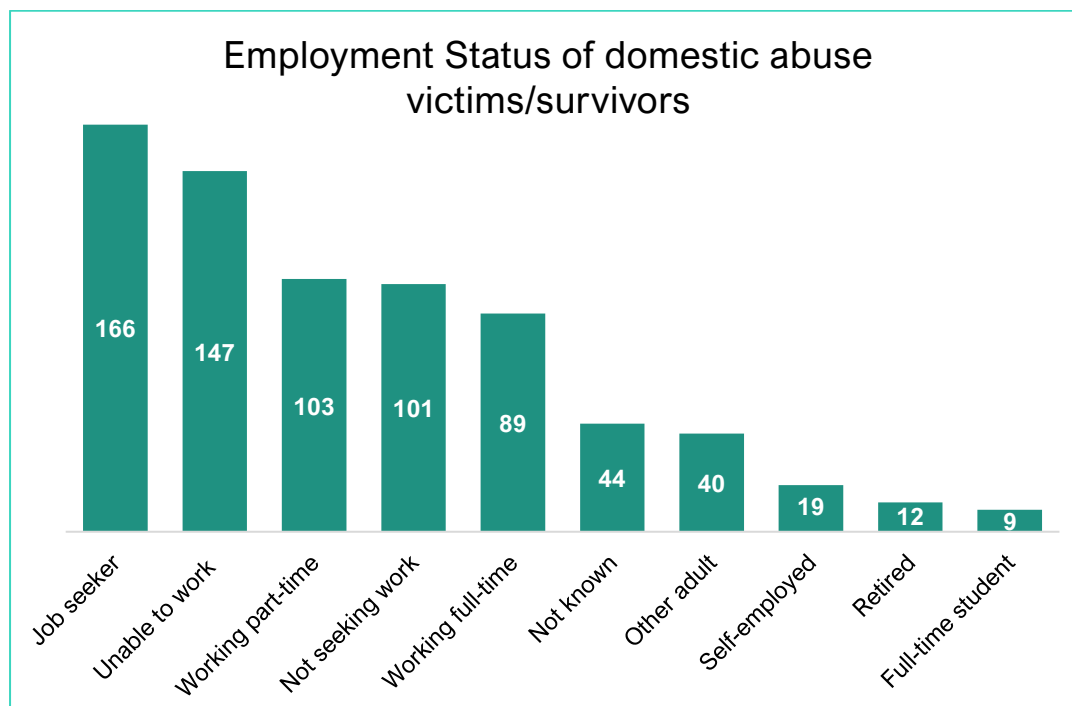
Overall, 68% of applicants were White British, followed by 6% White and Black Caribbean and 6% White Other. 5% of applicants were Black or Black British Caribbean and 4% Black or Black British African (figure 23).

Figure 23: Recorded ethnicity of domestic abuse victims/ survivors who have made applications to Home Choice Bristol



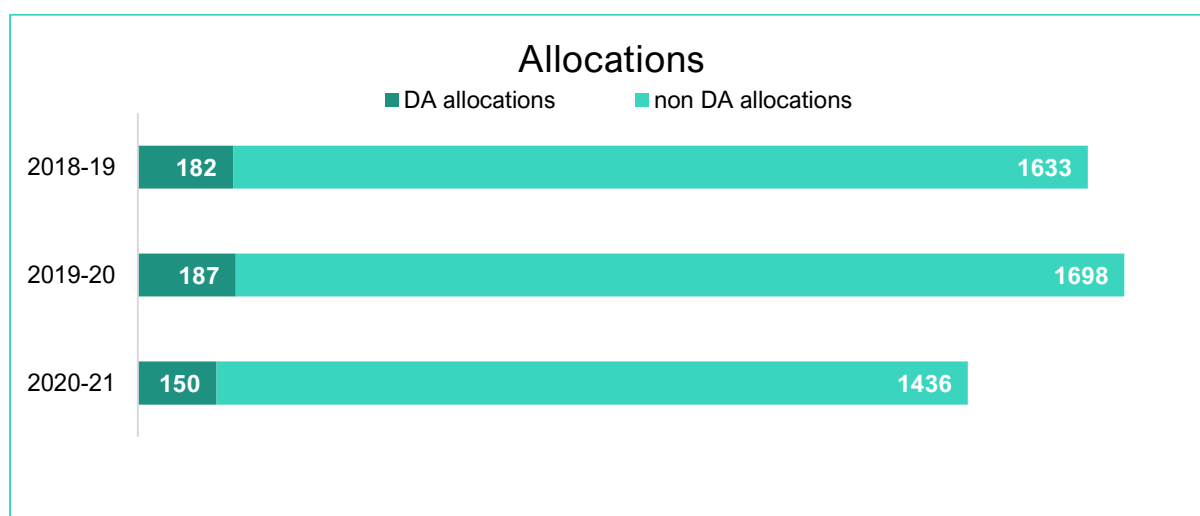
As of 9th August 2021, the majority of domestic abuse victims/survivors who have Home Choice Applications were Job Seekers or Unable to work due to long term sickness or disability. In total 56% were unemployed, 30% were employed or a full-time student and 2% were retired (figure 24).

Figure 24: Employment status of domestic abuse victims/ survivors with Home Choice Applications



The following figure indicates the domestic abuse allocations as compared to total allocations. In 2020/21 9% of all allocations were domestic abuse related, in the previous 2 years this was 10%.

Figure 25: Domestic abuse allocations as compared to total allocations



2.2.4 Children and Family Services

2.2.4.1 *Statutory Children's Social Care*

Domestic abuse referrals are discussed through a daily "incident review meeting" which is attended by police, a front door decision maker, IDVA and the local domestic abuse support charity Next Link. Incidents from the last 24 hours are jointly considered (rapid triage) and parties present indicate whether they will require a referral to their service or not. Children's Social Care then receive the accepted contact where there are child safeguarding or support needs through the front door.

In total in 2020/21 there were 3,406 referrals to Children's Social Care. Of these, 17% of referrals were domestic abuse related (568 referrals). The majority of domestic abuse referrals come into Children's Social Care from Police, Education and the Public. 'Other' makes up a significant proportion of referrals. The majority of referrals result in a Child in Need Assessment (CIN), while others are progressed to a Child Protection Plan or no further action. In 2020/21 2,174 children were progressed to a CIN plan and 633 to a child protection plan (table 33).

Table 33: Action following referrals into Children's Social Care

All referrals	2020-21
Progressed to Child in Need assessment	2174
Progressed to Child Protection assessment	633
No further action/closed	389
Unknown/other	114
Signposted to another agency (single agency response)	0
Non-statutory multi-agency response (e.g., team around the family, troubled families)	0

The majority of domestic abuse referrals (84%) also result in a CIN assessment, 475 (table 34). 68 went on to no further action and 59 progressed to a Child Protection Plan.

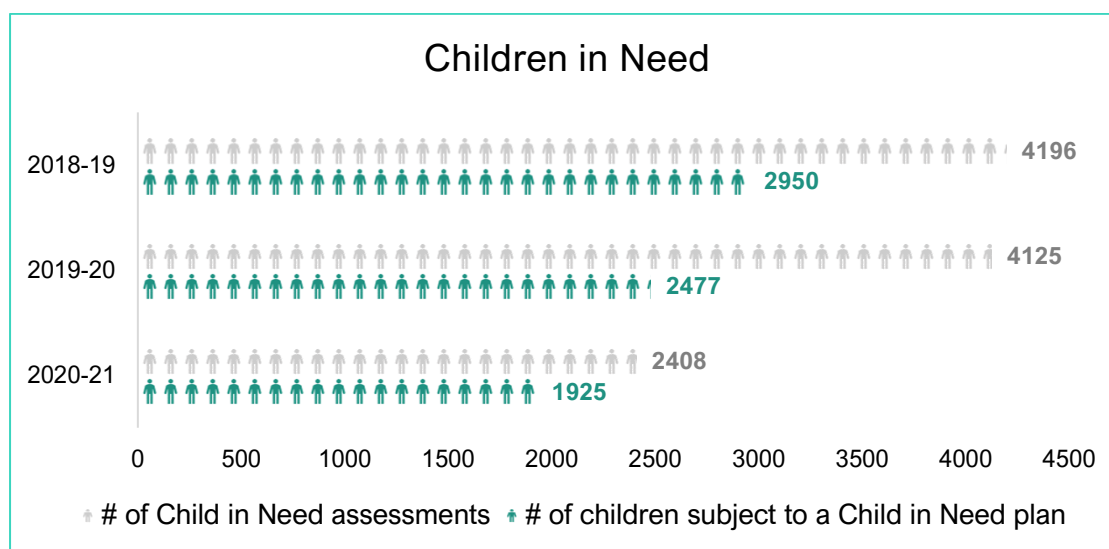
Table 34: Action following domestic abuse referrals into Children's Social Care

All referrals	2020-21
Progressed to Child in Need assessment	475
No further action/closed	68
Progressed to Child Protection assessment	59
Unknown/other	16
Signposted to another agency (single agency response)	0
Non-statutory multi-agency response (e.g., team around the family, troubled families)	0

Statutory Children's Service Response

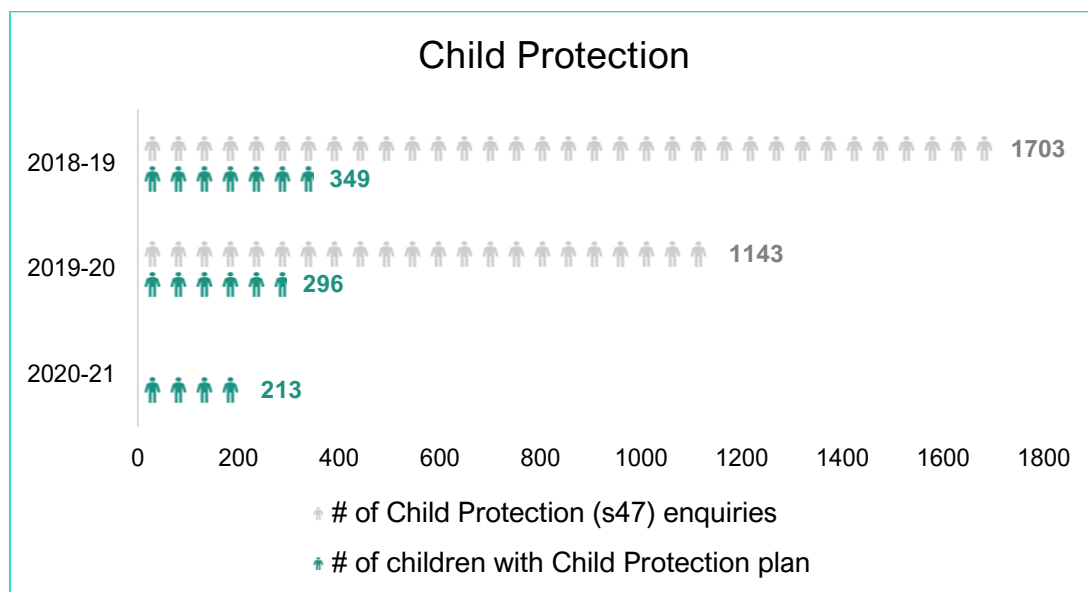
The number of Children & Family Assessments have decreased year on year for the past three years, with 4196 assessments in 2018/19 and 2,408 assessments in 2020/21, CIN plans have also followed the same trajectory (figure 26). There were 2,950 children subject to CIN plans in 2018/19 and 1,925 in 2020/21. The rate of CIN plans per 10,000 population was 314 in 2018/19, 263 in 2019/20 and 204 in 2020/21.

Figure 26: Children and Family Assessments and Children in Need Plans



The number of child protection enquiries (S47) have increased year on year for the past three years from 1,703 in 2018/19 to 1,143 in 2019/20 (figure 27) (data unavailable for 2020/21). There have been small decreases in the number of children on a Child Protection Plan. In 2020/21 there were 213 on a CP plan, the lowest in three years. The rate of children on CP plans per 10,000 was 23 in 2020/21, down from 37 in 2018/19.

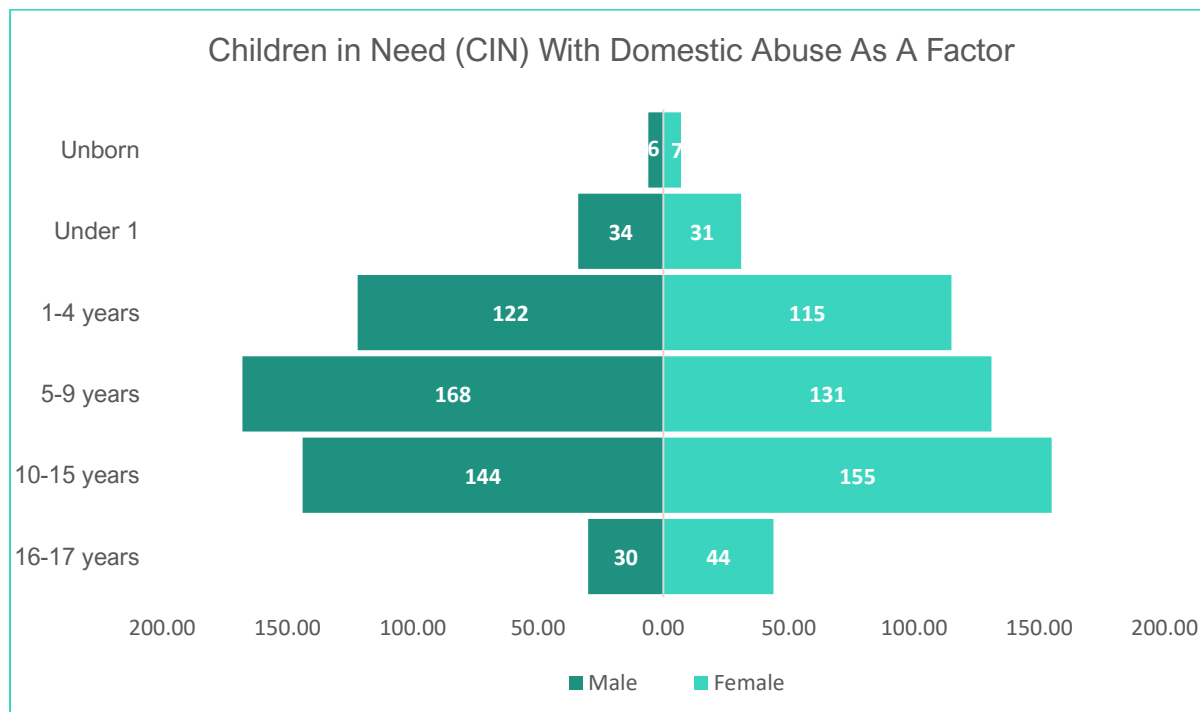
Figure 27: Child protection enquiries



Children in Need (CIN) with domestic abuse as a factor

Around half (51%) of children subject to a CIN plan with domestic abuse as a factor were male which is in line with the population (figure 28). The majority of males were 10-15 years, and the majority of females were 5-9 years old.

Figure 28: Children in Need (CIN) with domestic abuse as a factor



The majority of children are White British. There has been an increase in Asian or Asian British from 2% in 2018/19 to 4% in 2020/21 (table 35).

Table 35: Recorded ethnicity of children in need with domestic abuse as a factor

CIN With DA as a factor	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
White or White British	739	702	700
Asian or Asian British	24	22	39
Black or Black British	79	51	63
Mixed or dual heritage	159	159	165
Gypsy/Roma/Traveller	10	11	4
Other/unknown	15	27	27

The majority of Children in Need experienced Domestic Abuse of a parent, Mental Health needs of a parent and Emotional abuse. Other common factors were parent drug use and neglect and alcohol use of a parent.

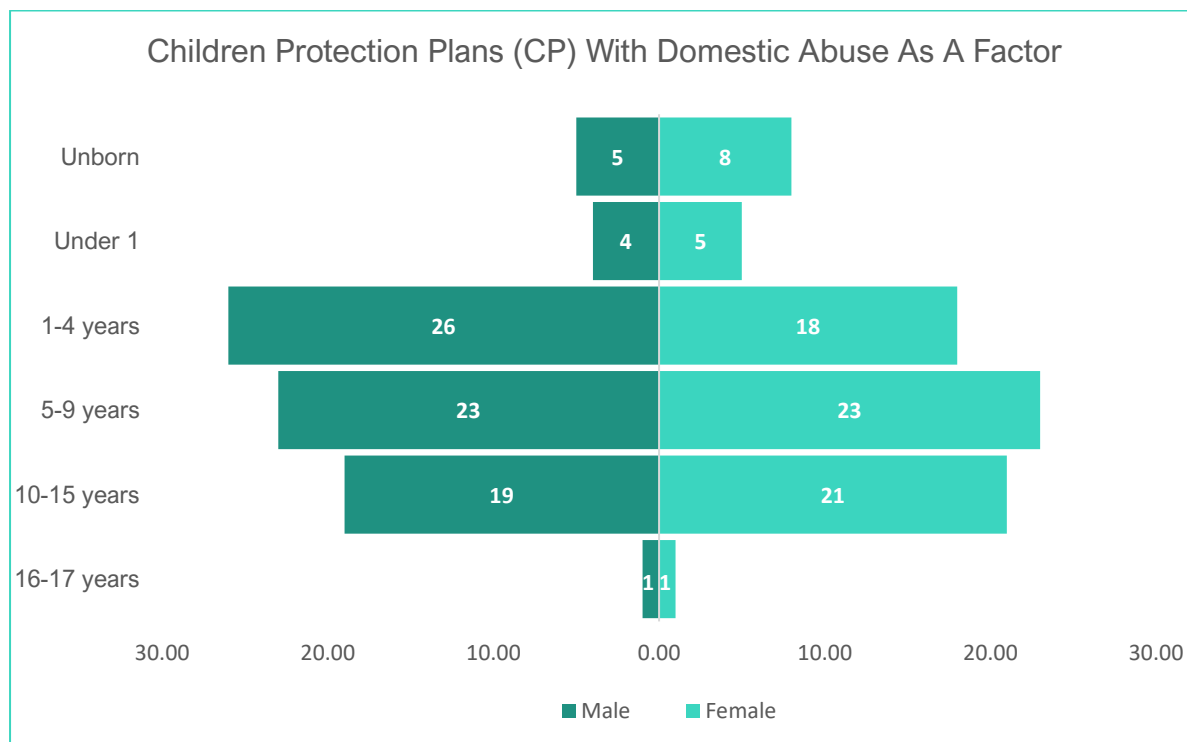
Table 36: Co-morbid factors for Children in Need

Co-morbid factors	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Domestic abuse – parent	2230	2152	2221
Mental health – parent	1391	1453	1553
Emotional abuse	1582	1493	1528
Drug use – parent	1006	1065	1140
Neglect	900	886	870
Domestic abuse – child	874	843	803
Alcohol use – parent	836	754	785
Physical abuse	570	552	567
Mental health – child	349	384	438
Physical disability – parent	256	269	261
Learning disability – child	253	219	254
Socially unacceptable behaviour	239	248	228
Learning disability – parent	185	156	180
Physical disability – child	115	112	159
Sexual abuse	97	121	132
Self-harm	143	147	126
Child sexual exploitation	132	119	113
Drug use – child	133	126	92
Gangs	65	65	68
Alcohol use – child	53	37	39
Other	22	12	28
Trafficking	14	15	9
Privately fostered	6	2	6
Young carer	3	2	3
Female genital mutilation	2	2	3

Child Protection (CP) with domestic abuse as a factor

Males and females are equally represented Child Protection Plans with domestic abuse. The majority of females are aged 1-9 whereas the majority of males are aged 5-15 (figure 29).

Figure 29: Child Protection Plans with Domestic Abuse as a factor



The proportion of children on a CP plan experiencing domestic abuse who are White or White British has decreased from 77% in 2018/19 to 81% in 2020/21. Conversely, those who were Black or Black British increased from 2% to 4% (table 37).

Table 37: Recorded ethnicity of children on a child protection plan experiencing domestic abuse

CP With DA as a factor	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
White or White British	171	138	112
Asian or Asian British	0	0	0
Black or Black British	5	6	6
Mixed or dual heritage	37	47	20
Gypsy/Roma/Traveller	7	0	1
Other/unknown	3	2	0

The majority of children on child protection plans, with domestic abuse as a factor, experience mental health conditions in a parent, emotional abuse, drug use of a parent and neglect (table 38).

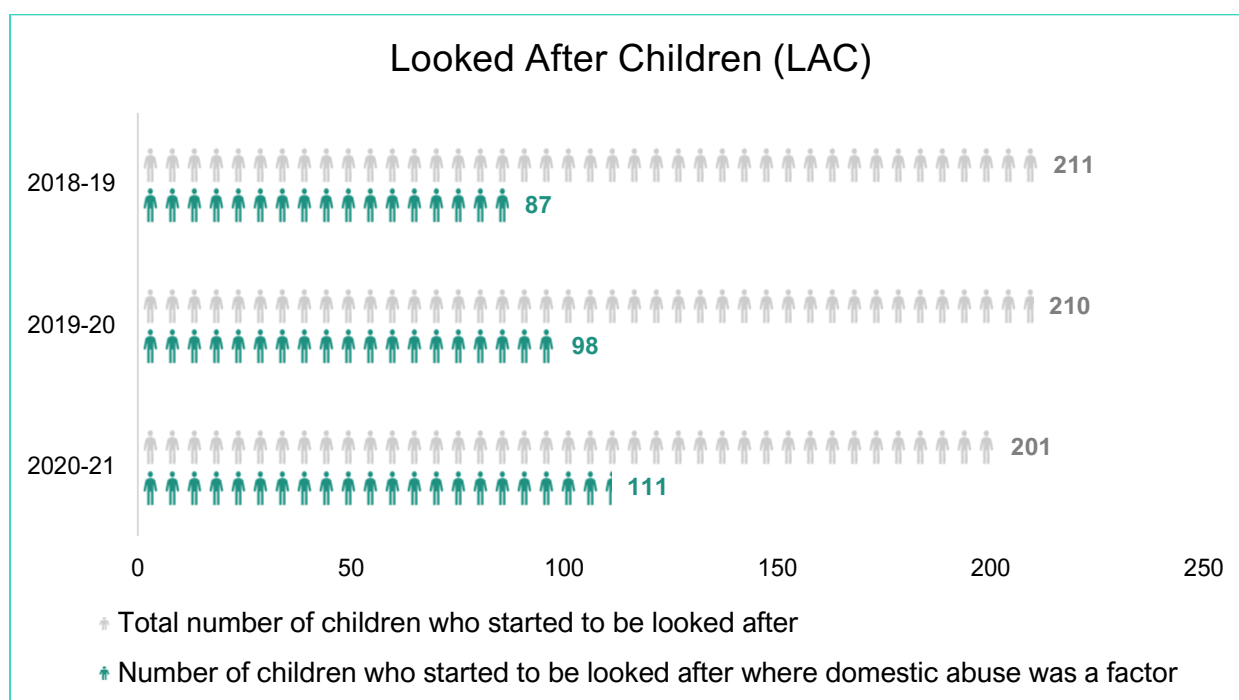
Table 38: Co-morbid factors for children on protection plans with domestic abuse as a factor

Co-morbid factors	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Domestic abuse – parent	602	408	378
Mental health – parent	377	290	257
Drug use – parent	249	206	213
Domestic abuse – child	254	134	158
Alcohol use – parent	222	190	151
Mental health – child	105	62	74
Young carer	25	39	63
Physical disability – parent	29	62	43
Learning disability – child	72	19	32
Learning disability – parent	61	16	31
Socially unacceptable behaviour	60	24	23
Child sexual exploitation	26	21	20
Self-harm	42	18	20
Drug use – child	33	10	14
Alcohol use – child	14	7	10
Physical disability – child	40	28	10
Going missing	28	8	10
Gangs	5	0	7
Other	2	0	1
Privately fostered	2	0	0
Trafficking	3	0	0

2.2.4.2 *Looked After Children (LAC) due to domestic abuse*

In 2020/21, 201 children were looked after, a reduction on 2018/19 where 211 children were looked after. The rate of looked after children was 66 per 10,000 people in 2018/19 and 67 in 2020/21 (figure 30). The number of looked after children with DA as a factor has increased from 87 in 2018/19 to 111 in 2020/21. This is an increase from 41% LAC with domestic abuse as a factor to 55% over three years.

Figure 30: Looked After Children (LAC) and LAC due to domestic abuse



The main reason for children becoming looked after is because of abuse or neglect, followed by family dysfunction. Overall abuse and neglect has increased over the past 3 years (table 39).

Table 39: Abuse type for children becoming looked after

Abuse Type	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
N1. Abuse or neglect	72	77	88
N2. Child disability	1	3	1
N3. Parents illness or disability	1	0	2
N4. Family in acute distress	1	4	6
N5. Family dysfunction	10	13	11
N6. Socially unacceptable behaviour	1	1	0
N7. Low income	0	0	0
N8. Absent parenting	0	0	0

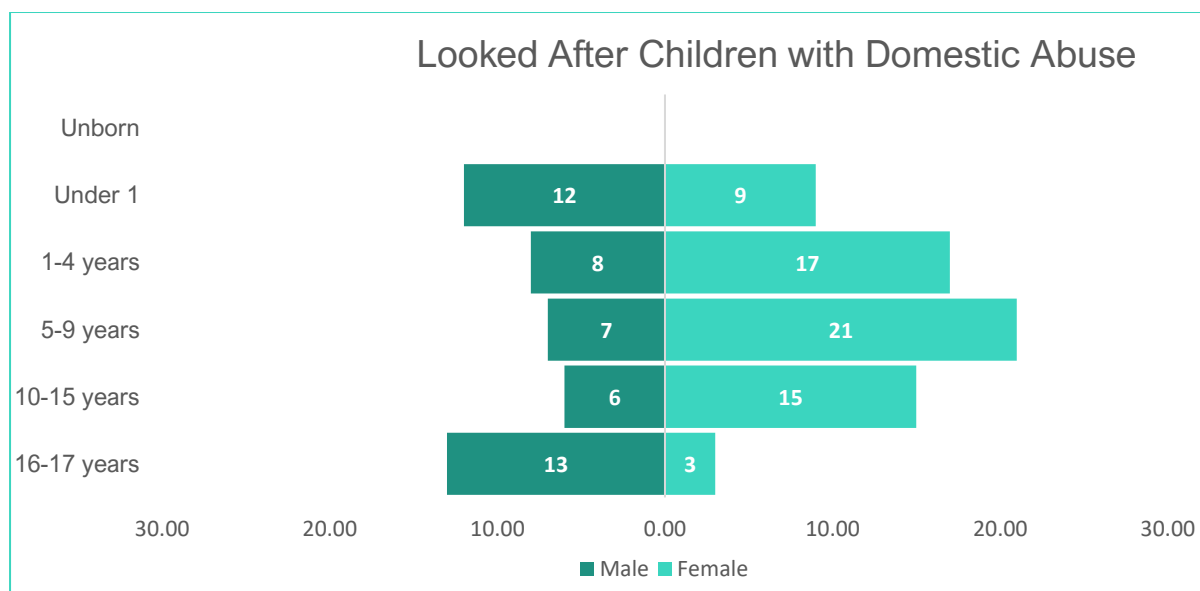
The majority, 72, have care orders and 34 have voluntary agreements under section 20. Voluntary agreements under section 20 have increased since 2019/20 (table 40).

Table 40: Legal status

Legal Status	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Care orders	47	60	72
Voluntary agreements under section 20	29	27	34
Placement order granted	2	0	0
Youth justice legal statuses	1	3	1
Detained for child protection	7	8	4

The majority of looked after children are placed in foster care with another carer (not a friend or relative) or a relative. Around 59% of all looked after children with domestic abuse as a factor were female, most commonly between the ages of 5 and 9 years. Males are also more commonly under 1 (figure 31).

Figure 31: Looked after children with domestic abuse; age and gender



The overall proportion of looked after children with Domestic Abuse as a factor who are White or White British (table 41). The proportion of children who are Black and Black British has decreased from 14% in 2018/19 to just 3% in 2020/21. The proportion of Mixed or Dual Heritage children with domestic abuse as a factor has increased from 6% in 18/19 to 15% in 20/21.

Table 41: Recorded ethnicity of looked after children where domestic abuse is a factor

Looked After Children with domestic Abuse Factor	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
White or White British	63	75	80
Asian or Asian British	5	1	5
Black or Black British	12	6	3
Mixed or dual heritage	5	14	17
Gypsy/Roma/Traveller	0	0	3
Other/unknown	1	2	3

2.2.5 Health Services

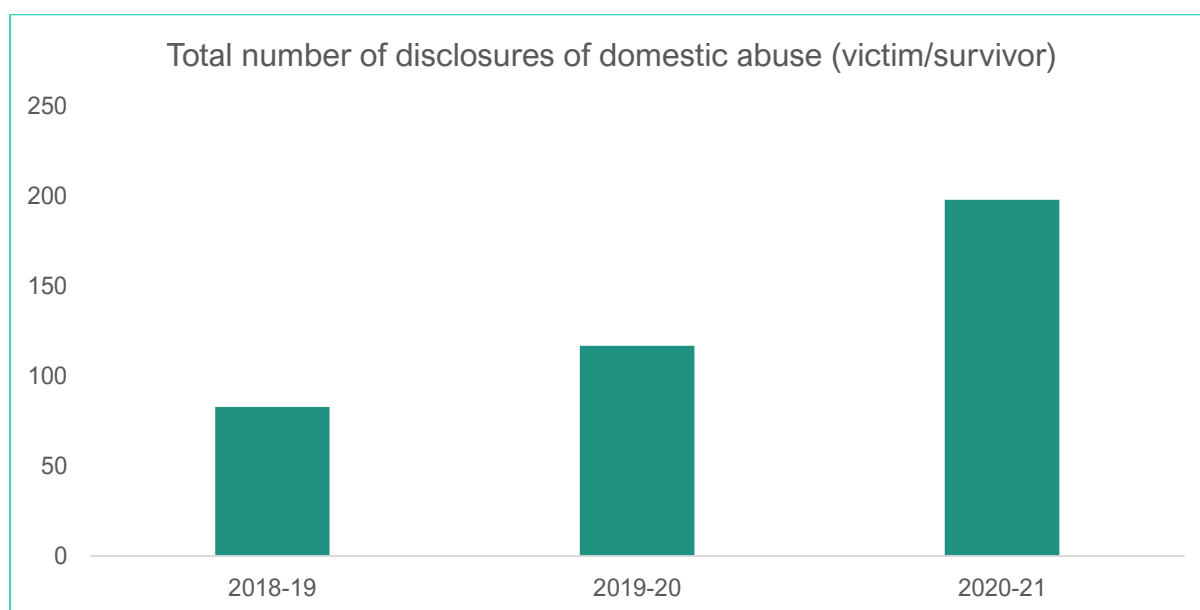
2.2.5.1 Acute Health

Disclosures and Referrals Related to Domestic Abuse in University Hospital Bristol and Weston (UHBW)

The total number of disclosures of domestic abuse made to University Hospital Bristol and Weston (UHBW)[†] has increased in the past three years, from a low of 83 in 2018-19 to a peak of 198 in 2020-21 (figure 32).

The number of disclosures of perpetrating domestic abuse is only available for 2020-21, during which two disclosures were made.

Figure 32: Total number of disclosures of domestic abuse made to University Hospital Bristol and Weston (UHBW)

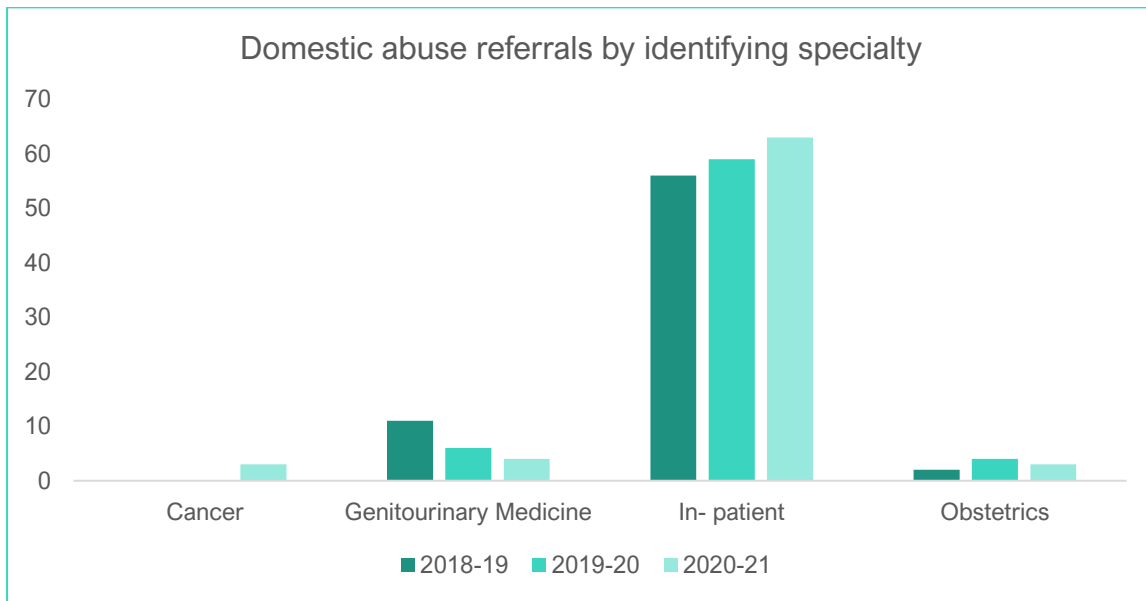


The vast majority of domestic abuse referrals came in via an A&E point of delivery, accounting for 112 in 2020-21. 18 referrals were also made via inpatient wards and 17 referrals were made via an outpatient appointment point of delivery.

Where known, the identifying specialty with the largest number of domestic abuse referrals were listed as 'in-patients'. Other specialties known to have made domestic abuse referrals include genitourinary medicine, obstetrics and cancer (figure 33).

[†] Please note the data includes hospital sites in Bristol and Weston Super Mare, however the numbers at the Weston Super Mare site are expected to be considerably less than Bristol.

Figure 33: Domestic abuse referrals by identifying speciality



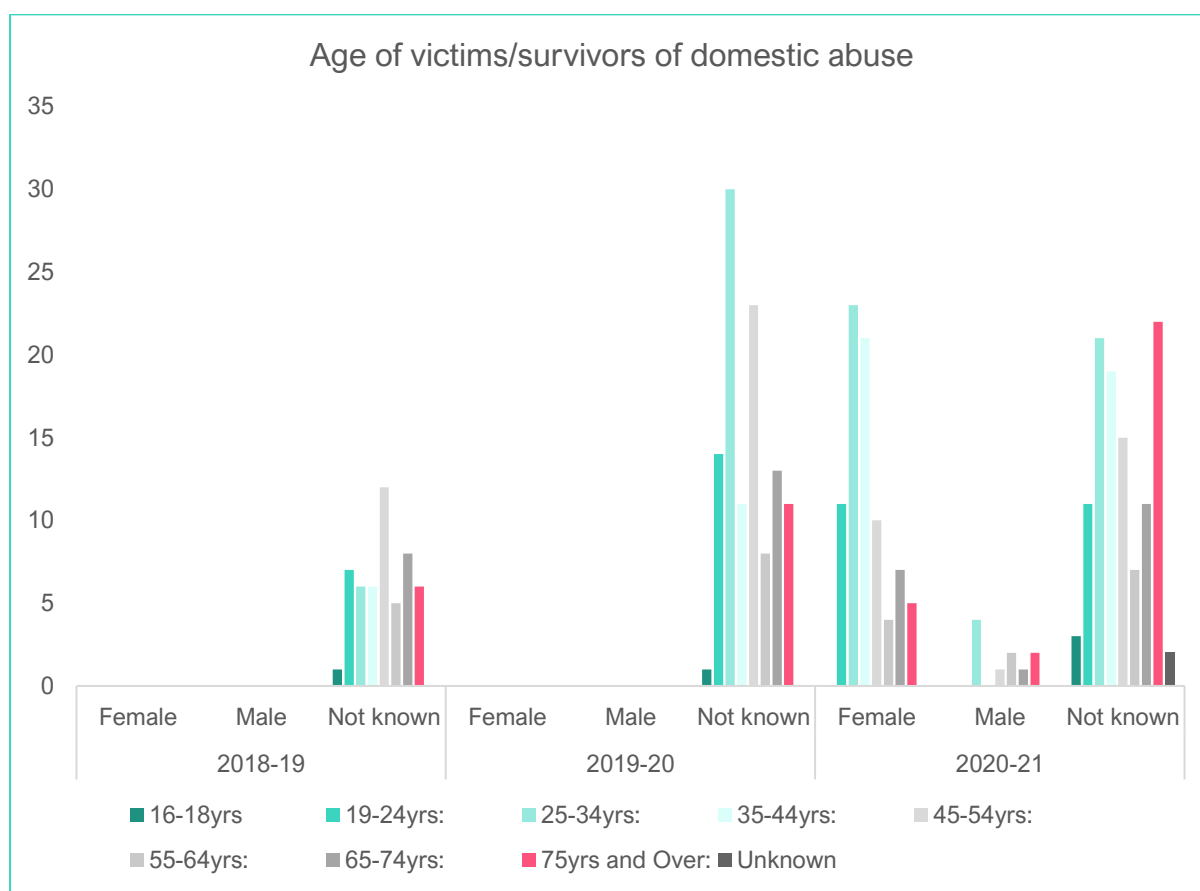
Demographics, Risk Factors and Needs

N.B.: Where data is provided, years 2018-2020 relate to University Hospitals Bristol sites, year 2020-21 also includes Weston General site as Trusts were amalgamated.

Gender information of victims/survivors of domestic abuse is available only for 2020-21 for Weston site.

Over the past three years, the 25-to-34-year age group has formed the largest proportion of victims/survivors of domestic abuse, accounting for 21%. However, in 2020-21, victims/survivors aged 75 years and over were the most common age group known to UHBW to be experiencing domestic abuse, with 39 victims/survivors during this year (figure 34).

Figure 34: Demographics of victims/survivors making disclosures through UHBW



2.3 Other Bristol Data

2.3.1 Quality of Life Survey

The Quality of Life⁷⁶ survey provides an annual snapshot of the quality of life in Bristol. The 2020 survey was sent to a random sample of 33,000 Bristol households during the Coronavirus pandemic. The 2020/21 Quality of Life survey found no change to the percentage of people who think “Domestic abuse is a private matter” from 2018/19 (7%), but this dropped to 9% in deprived areas (from 15% last year). By ward, this varies from 1.4% in Clifton Down who think domestic abuse is a private matter to 17.1% in Stockwood. By equality group:

- 21.1% of those with no qualifications thought it was a private matter
- 14.7% Asian/Asian British thought it was a private matter
- 14.3% of those aged over 65 years thought it was a private matter
- 13.4% of those in Council rented accommodation thought it was a private matter
- 13.3% of other religions thought it was a private matter.

NB: "2020 Deprived" shows results from households in the 10% most deprived areas within Bristol, based on the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation.

2.3.2 The Pupil Voice Survey

The Pupil Voice survey operated on behalf of Bristol City Council by the Schools Health Education Unit (SHEU) is a comprehensive school pupil survey in terms of scope, detail and coverage. In 2018, more than half of all schools participated (60). In excess of 3,200 pupils in years 4 and 6 in primary school completed the survey representing more than one-third of pupils in these year groups across the city, and more than 3,400 from years 8 and 10 in secondary school, nearly half of all pupils in these year groups. The Pupil Voice survey covers a large number of issues in detail; relating to physical and mental health, many of the risk factors and behaviours related to them, asks pupils for opinions on them, their school experience and living in Bristol more generally. The survey also collects information on the demographics and circumstances of the pupil respondents.

When asked about problems they worry about, 55% of primary school pupils said they worried about family 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'; however further detail here was not given. For those that worried about keeping safe at home, a total of 34% said they worried 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'. This was higher in year 4 where 42% of boys and 43% of girls gave this answer, compared to year 6 where it was 26% of boys and 29% of girls^s. However, this data cannot be directly linked to domestic abuse as keeping safe at home could be interpreted differently by pupils for example their answer may relate to risk of other crime from outside sources.

The Pupil Voice survey includes some questions asking young people to comment on issues in their home. The questions talk about events during the last month that 'worried' the respondent giving a measure of conflict in the home and its impact, directly reported by young people in Bristol. Of year 8s and 10s, 18% reported feeling worried by shouting or arguing at home in the last month (figure 35), with higher reports of worries amongst LGBT+ young people, young carers and young women. Black, Asian and minoritized young people are less likely to report these worrying incidents, and non-British white more likely. Girls are more likely to report feeling worried.

The survey also asks about bullying and controlling behaviour. Around 4% of year 8s and 10s in Bristol reported bullying and controlling behaviour. For both these questions it is important to note that they are about all conflict in the home, so may be between any family members. Finally, young people were asked to report any recent violence at home that worried them; 6% of young people in Bristol did so, and LGBT+ young people were significantly more likely to report worrying levels of violence at home (figure 36).

^s Please note that 103 pupils of total survey didn't specify whether they are a boy or a girl or were unsure/ preferred not to say/described themselves in some other way. These pupils are not included data which are split by sex or year respectively, however they will be included in any total figures. Total survey respondents 3162 (1600 male, 1562 female; 1525 Year 4, 1637 Year 6)

Figure 35: Percentage of pupils worried about shouting/arguing at home, Pupil Voice Survey 2018/19

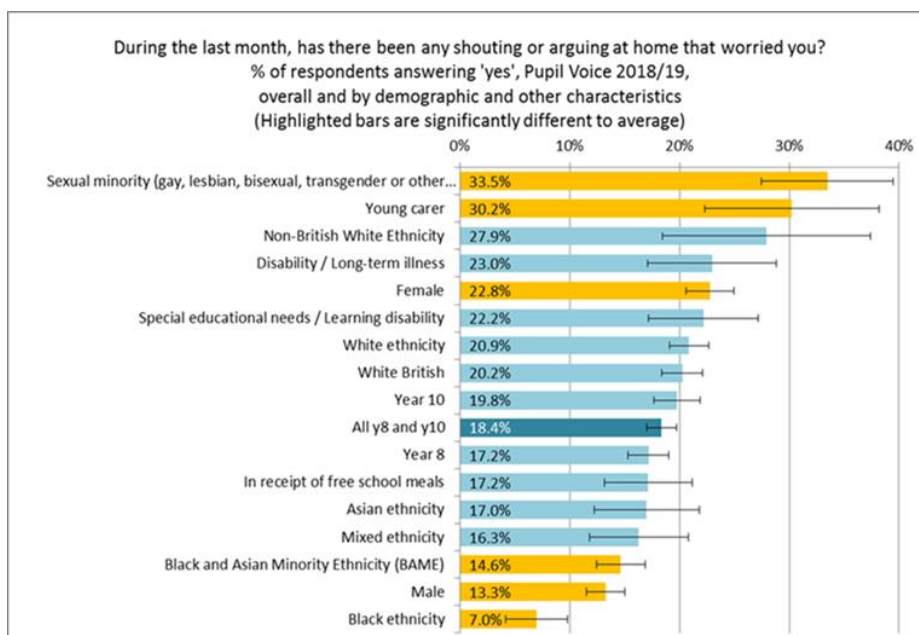
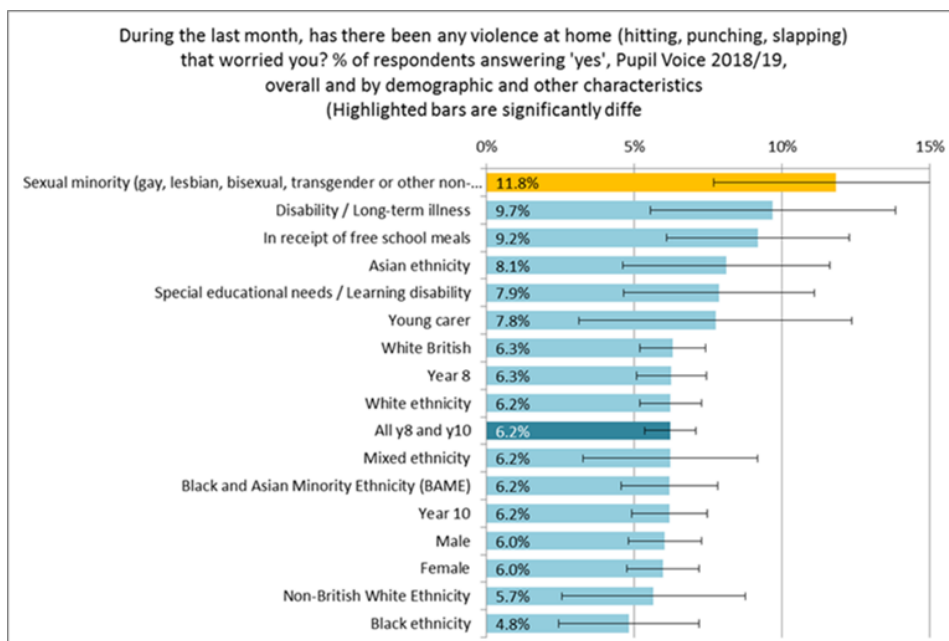


Figure 36: Percentage of pupils worried about violence at home, Pupil Voice Survey 2018/19



3. What services / assets do we have to prevent and meet this need? *Overview of domestic abuse services and provision in Bristol*

3.1 Domestic abuse provision overview

This section provides an overview of the domestic abuse provision available in Bristol City.

3.1.1 Overview of specialist DA services offered in Bristol

There are several domestic abuse services providing support to victims/survivors in Bristol.

- **The Bristol and South Gloucestershire Children and Young People (CYP) Service** run by Julian House is designed to help CYP (between 4-17 years old) who have experienced domestic abuse, either in their own intimate relationship or within their family home. They provide help to each CYP to process what has happened, to try and understand the impact it has had on the way they feel about the world around them; and their place in it. They help support each CYP to find coping mechanisms and to recognise when to ask for help and who to go to.
- **Freedom Programme** – an up to 12-week group work programme for survivors of domestic abuse aged 16+. The programme gives women the opportunity to educate themselves about the abuse that they have experienced. The programme aims to reduce women’s sense of isolation and gives women the ability to speak to others who really “get it”. This is co-ordinated by Next Link (see below) but many of the groups take place within Children’s Centres.
- **Reprovide Research project (Splitz/ Bristol University) – Behaviour Change programme** for men aged 21+ who are concerned about their violent and abusive behaviour within their intimate relationships. The programme runs for 23 weeks and is open only to those in heterosexual relationships living in the Avon & Somerset area. High risk perpetrators may not be suitable. A **Women’s Safety Officer from Next Link** provides support to all current and ex partners of the men on the programme and **Therapeutic Recovery support** for children of families receiving Reprovide support.
- **Next Link** provide several services in Bristol City, namely:
 - **Bristol crisis response** - Crisis service for women and families in Bristol at high risk of domestic abuse. Includes a Black, Asian & minoritized communities IDVA, Black, Asian & minoritized communities crisis worker and HBV and Forced Marriage specialist. Crisis worker focuses on immediate risk and safety including housing, engaging with CJS, emotional support and safeguarding. The service is open to women 16 and over who are deemed to be at risk of harm as a result of domestic abuse, by scoring 14 or above on the DASH risk checklist or through professional judgement.
 - **Bristol community outreach and resettlement** - Community support for women and families who are at medium or low risk of harm as a result of domestic abuse. Support lasts for approximately 6-9 months. Also provides resettlement support for families leaving the safe house. 1 children’s worker to support children who are on CP plans, child in need or have SEND and first-time mothers with babies under 1 or pregnant. abuse on DASH or professional judgement.
 - **Bristol Families in Focus IDVAs** - 3 part time seconded IDVA’s to FIF teams in Bristol South, East Central and North. 1 full time domestic

abuse engagement workers seconded to FIF South team, and 1 FTE worker in North and East Central FIF teams who support families in schools, children's centres and social services.

- **BRI Hospital IDSVAs** - 2 FTE IDVAs co-located at BRI emergency department, providing support to women, men and children who attend A&E services across BRI, children's and Eye hospital and are experiencing abuse.
- **Southmead Hospital IDSVAs** who are co-located at Southmead emergency department. They provide support to women, men and children from South Gloucestershire and Bristol area.
- **Bristol IRIS service** - 2 FTE domestic abuse workers who offer training to all GP practices in Bristol and direct referral and advocacy support for victims identified by clinical or non-clinical staff. They provide support to women at medium, standard and low risk of harm or those who have experienced historic domestic abuse.
- **Bristol (Covid) response team** - 2 x Triage workers, Black, Asian & minoritised communities IDVA, Complex Needs IDVA and Senior IDVA practitioner to respond to increased demand. This service provides support to women only.
- **Bristol Safe House service** - Safe houses for families, single women, and women with complex needs and experiencing multiple disadvantage. Includes a specialist Black, Asian & minoritized communities safe house and self-contained flats as well as shared housing. One children's worker to support children who are on CP plans, child in need or have SEND and first-time mothers with babies under 1 or pregnant worker. The complex needs house is for women who have needs in relation to substance misuse and/or mental ill health.
- **Bristol Group work coordinator** - DVA group work coordinator – Triages and coordinates Freedom (including easy learn programme), recovery toolkit and CRUSH across the city. Provides support to facilitators and quality assurance. It is open to women only for the Freedom programme, women who are no longer in an abusive relationship for RTK and children and young people aged 13-18 for CRUSH.
- **Bristol Peer Support** - Peer support for women who are recovering after being a victim of domestic abuse. A Next Link designed and externally evaluated programme. Facilitated by a DVA worker, the closed group of 8 women chose each class topic and activity and can opt in to become a co facilitator receiving training and support.
- Next Link also provides a **Duty Triage** service in Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. It is a Single Point of Contact Triage duty team for all services apart from IRIS and other co-located services. Telephone, face to face or live chat available. 08.30-5.30 Mon – Fri, 09.30 – 1pm Sat. All workers complete risk and need assessment, offer advice, emotional support and safety planning and refer to the most relevant service.

- **ONE25** provides a range of services for women over 18 years old who are street sex-working or at risk of street sex-working in Bristol City and South Gloucestershire including:
 - **Two IDSVAs** providing tailored support to meet women's specific needs around multiple disadvantages including domestic abuse. They also have the **Peony programme**, which provides holistic support for women facing multiple disadvantages. They hold group sessions to develop skills, wellbeing and independence. Also, specialist support groups, including **Rise** (for women who have experienced domestic abuse).
 - **Night outreach** for street sex-working women. The outreach van goes out every weeknight providing practical support and encouraging women to access further services.
 - **Drop-in centre** providing practical support including opportunity to see visiting professionals e.g. GP, substitute prescribing nurse etc.
 - **Pause Bristol**, providing support to up to 20 women from Bristol City and South Gloucestershire, using an innovative and proven model of care, which supports women to break the devastating cycle of having their children removed.

- **Victim Support** provide the following two services to victims/survivors in Bristol City:
 - **High Risk Women's Domestic Abuse Service** - Women experiencing domestic abuse who are at high risk of harm (either based on the DASH score or on professional judgement).
 - **Male Domestic Abuse Service** - Men experiencing domestic abuse, at any risk level.

- For 2021/22 Bristol is also taking part in the **Respite Rooms** 12-month trial offering short term safe accommodation with intensive support to victims of domestic abuse and violence. The project will offer women short-term assistance to ensure they get the support they need, in advance of further guidance to help them towards longer-term solutions for their personal needs. This project has 10 spaces and is funded by a grant from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The project is delivered in partnership by **St Mungo's** and **Next Link**.

3.1.2 Challenges and risks to specialist DA service provision in Bristol

After consulting with the providers of the services in Bristol, the following challenges and risks to specialist domestic abuse provision in Bristol were identified.

Lack of specialist staff

Service providers have recently found recruitment of specialist DA posts, such as IDVAs, particularly difficult. Such roles require highly skilled and experienced individuals, with IDVA training being held over a 12-day course, resulting in 4 written assignments. The impact of COVID-19 and Brexit has resulted in an increase in referrals and cases held by the services and a shortage of suitable staff to fill the vacancies. This puts increased pressure on the services by increasing caseloads of the existing staff, increasing waiting times and reducing quality of services.

Shortage of funding

Service providers have reported additional financial pressure created by the current economic environment. The COVID pandemic and Brexit have reduced funders' financial strength and has created an uncertain financial position for services, particularly for non-commissioned services which rely on grants and donations. This coupled with the increase in referrals and complexity of cases has created a challenging environment, in which providers are concerned about their ability to sustain their services.

Owing to Covid and Brexit, the financial resilience of both donors and funders is a concern in the mid to long-term.

Short term funding streams

"Year to year funding, puts an enormous strain on staff teams and makes planning of services incredibly difficult"

Short-term funds can be challenging for providers. This is because short term funds do not allow services to plan in the longer-term to meet the needs of the service. This threatens the sustainability for the service and creates instability which can often lead to loss of staff and thus experience and knowledge.

This is not just Bristol specific, but a national issue. A recent report by the DA Commissioner[†] listed a lack of funding to help expand capacity of services across the country and development of specialist capacity within other organisations as a key issue for domestic abuse services. To overcome this, the Commissioner recommends longer term funding streams to be utilised to not only ensure sustainability for specialist DA services, but also to provide a larger return on investment with the continuity of services meaning local knowledge, skills and key learning is not lost.

Shortage of referrals to perpetrator services

Services working with perpetrators of domestic abuse have found it challenging to receive referrals from professionals into the service. Professionals do not often consider making a referral for the perpetrator and when dealing with cases which feature domestic abuse, the focus is still mainly on the victim/survivor and children.

Nationally, the focus in the domestic abuse arena has shifted towards working with perpetrators to reduce their offending and the harm they cause. In 2021, the Home Office awarded over £11million to PCCs across England and Wales for programmes focusing on interventions to help stop perpetrators from committing domestic abuse. The Government is also set to publish their DA Perpetrator Strategy, which will aim to reduce domestic abuse offending. It's thus important that services working with

[†] DA Commissioner's Officer (2021), Domestic Abuse Commissioner submission to HM Treasury Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 - Recommendations <https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/FINAL-2109-Spending-Review-submission-from-the-Domestic-Abuse-Commissioner-for-England-and-Wales.pdf>

perpetrators are appropriately supported by raising professionals' awareness of them and ensuring that perpetrator intervention is given the strategic focus it requires during this shift.

3.2 Domestic abuse service demand and need profile

We want to understand the demographic of victim and survivors who access specialist domestic abuse provision in Bristol. We have worked with safe accommodation service providers to understand their service user cohort in line with the statutory domestic abuse needs assessment template. Additionally, we have worked with commissioners of community based domestic abuse services to use contract monitoring data to provide an overview of the cohort of victims and survivors that access support outside of safe accommodation. This section provides an overview of our findings.

3.2.1 Safe accommodation (Next Link)

Defining a refuge

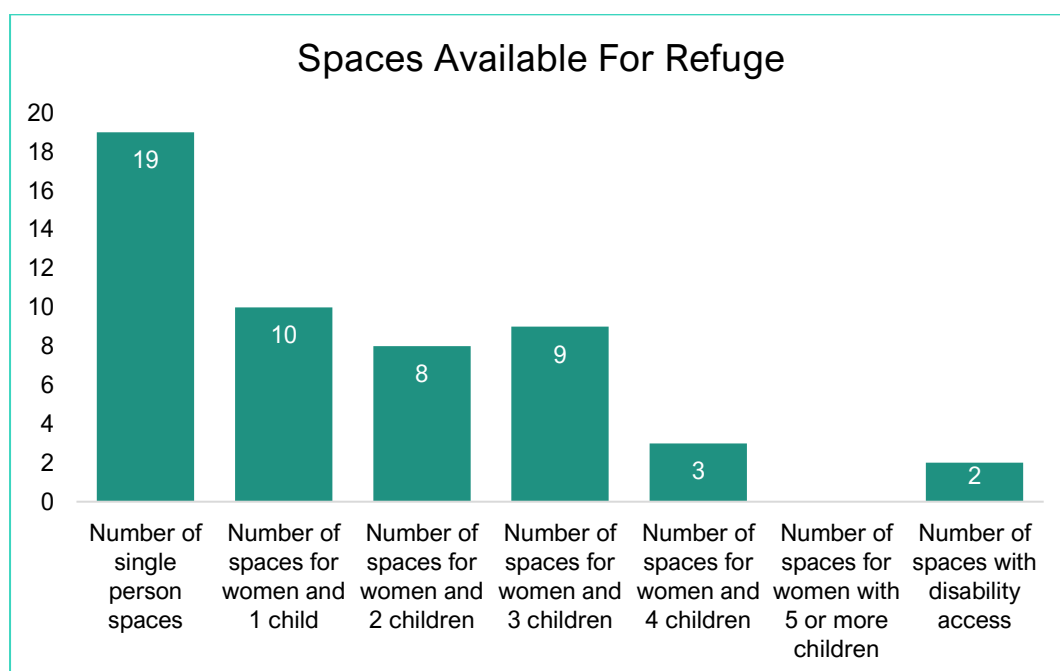
A refuge offers accommodation and intensive support which is tied to that accommodation. Victims, including their children, must be refuge residents to access expert emotional and practical support.

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Refuge spaces are counted as one space per household and sizes of the accommodation can vary from single spaces up to spaces suitable for women with five or more children.

Next Link provide refuge accommodation for Bristol City. They have 49 shared refuge spaces available, 7 of which are dispersed flatlets. This is 129% of the accommodation recommended by the Council of Europe which is positive. The majority of refuge provision in Bristol City is suitable for women who are either single or have up to three children. There are two spaces available for those with a disability and the service will take children up to the age of 18. The service will also look at each case on an individual basis to explore options for clients, such as those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPFs).

Figure 37: Spaces available for Refuge in Bristol



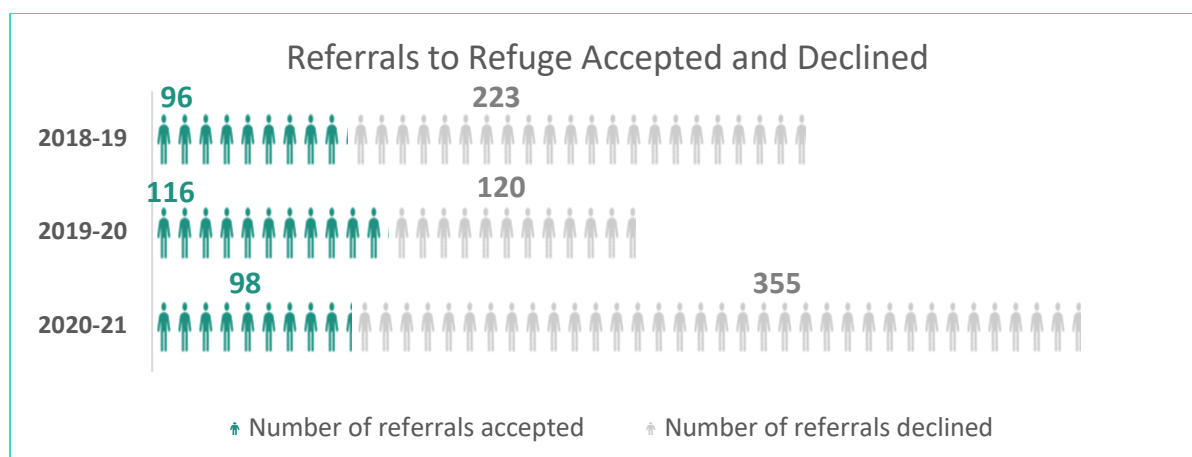
Bristol City’s Next Link service has all 49 refuge spaces fully commissioned (figure 37). All spaces in Bristol City are fully commissioned, meaning there are no spaces that are partially or not commissioned. Therefore, Bristol City do not have any costs for non-commissioned spaces.

Victims/survivors of domestic abuse will need to pay for refuge if they do not have access to Housing Benefit, for example, due to employment. In Bristol the average rent for a safe house room per week in Bristol City is £164.17.

3.2.1.1 *Safe accommodation service capacity and demand*

In 2018/19 there were 319 referrals for Refuge. This decreased to 236 in 2019/20 but in 2020/21 increased significantly to 453 referrals (figure 38). Despite the rise in referrals the proportion of those accepted has reduced from 30% in 2018/19 to 22% in 2020/21.

Figure 38: Outcomes of referrals to refuge, year on year



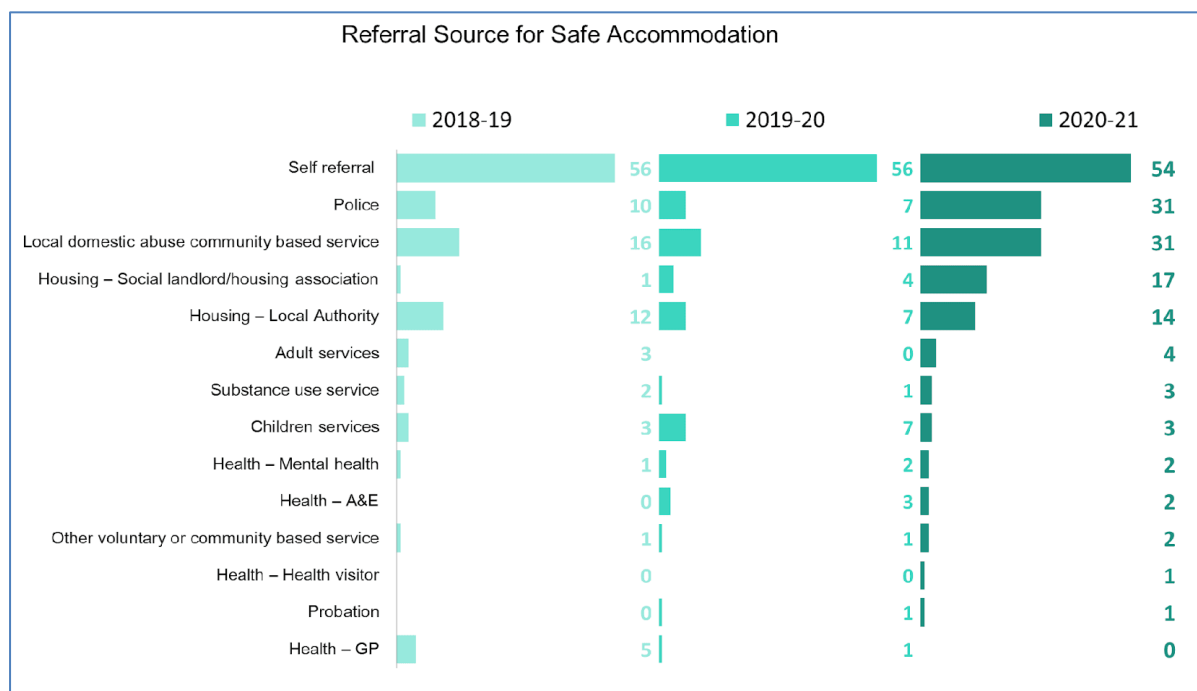
The most common reason for a declined referral across all 3 years is due to no space or capacity to support, followed closely by the victim/ survivor not wanting support (figure 39). There has been an increase in the number who are being supported elsewhere, e.g. through DA services agency.

Over the past three years the most common way victim/survivors are referred into the service is via a self-referral, followed by a referral from the Local Domestic Abuse Community Based Service and Police (figure 40). In 2020/21 there was an increase in referrals from Social Landlord/ Housing Associations and a small reduction has been noted in referrals from GPs over the past three years.

Figure 39: Reasons why referrals were declined



Figure 40: Referral source for Safe Accommodation



Safe accommodation Service Users

The number of referrals from outside the Local Authority area has increased over the past three years, with COVID-19 potentially impacting on referral numbers overall both inside and outside the Local Authority area during 2019/20 (tables 42 and 43).

Table 42: Number of referrals from outside the Local Authority area

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Outside of Local Authority area	118	95	192

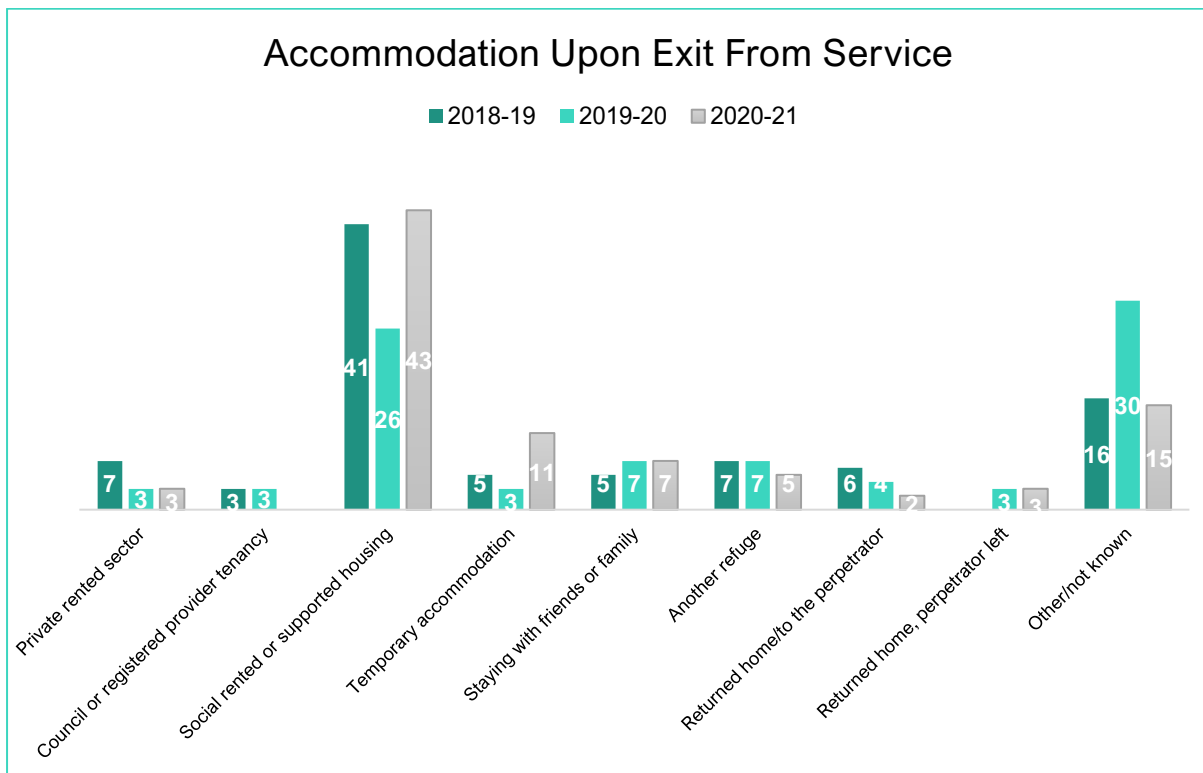
The number of clients out of area increased by 61% in 2020/21, compared to the previous year. There was also a significant increase in the number from Bristol in 2020/21.

Table 43: Breakdown of referrals from outside of Local Authority area

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Out of Area	66	61	98
North Somerset	9	2	58
South Gloucestershire	33	30	53
BANES	10	2	2

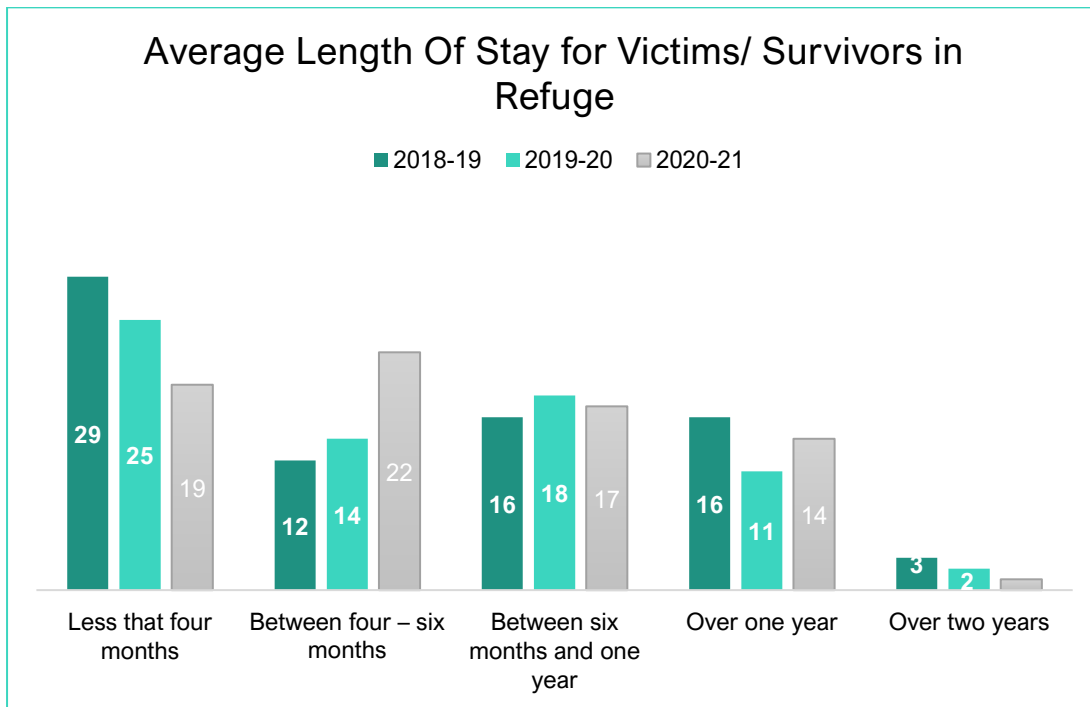
Upon exit from the service (figure 41), victims/ survivors most commonly moved into social rented or supported housing. In 2019/20 there was a significant reduction in the number who went into social rented or supported housing compared to the surrounding years, which may correlate with the impact of COVID. Those in 2020/21 who did not go into social rented or supported housing were likely to find accommodation in the temporary accommodation, the private rented sector and a small proportion stayed with friends or family.

Figure 41: Accommodation secured upon exit from service



During 2018/19 and 2019/20 the majority of victims/survivors stayed for less than 4 months in Refuge. In 2020/21, however, the majority actually stayed between 4 and 6 months (figure 42). There is a significant reduction in clients who stay for more than one year.

Figure 42: Average length of stay for victims/survivors in refuge

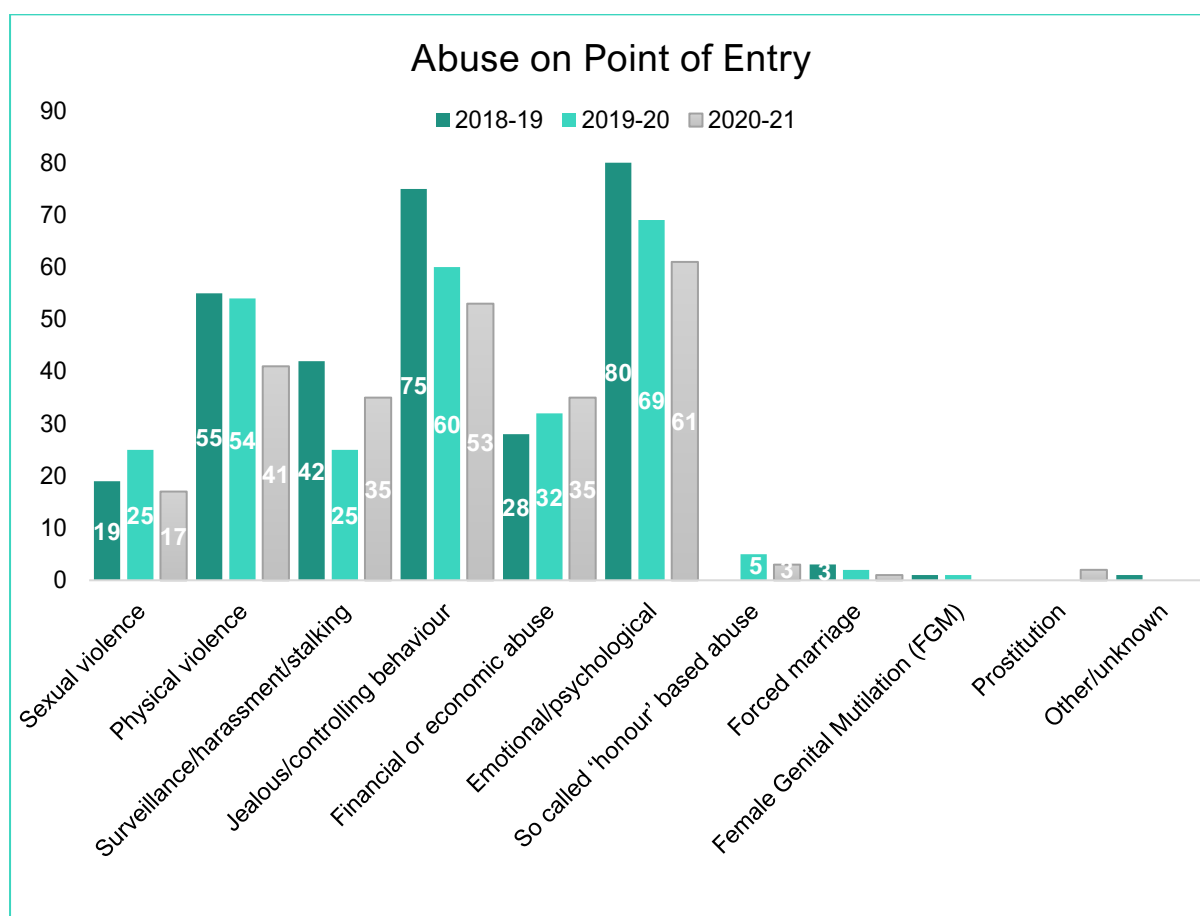


On average, clients stay in refuge for an average of 207 days, this did not vary significantly by year (table 44).

Table 44: Average length of stay in days

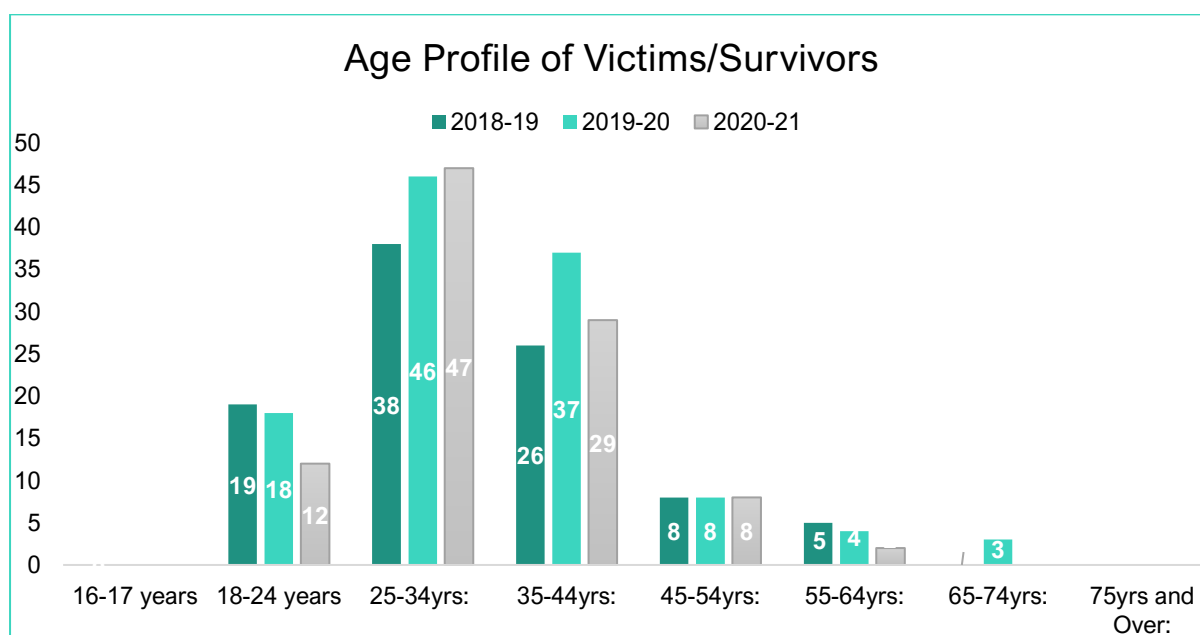
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Average length of stay – in days	222	199	209

Figure 43: Main type of abuse reported on point of entry



The most highly reported type of abuse on point of entry was emotional and psychological abuse, followed closely by jealous/controlling behaviour and physical violence (figure 43). These three areas of abuse have all seen reduction in 2020/21, however, financial or economic abuse has seen small increases year on year over the past three years. Whilst the most highly reported type of abuse on entry to service is emotional/psychological, the majority of victims who report this also report other types of abuse such as physical, sexual and economic abuse later during their stay. Emotional/psychological abuse being reported on its own is uncommon for survivors needing safe house accommodation.

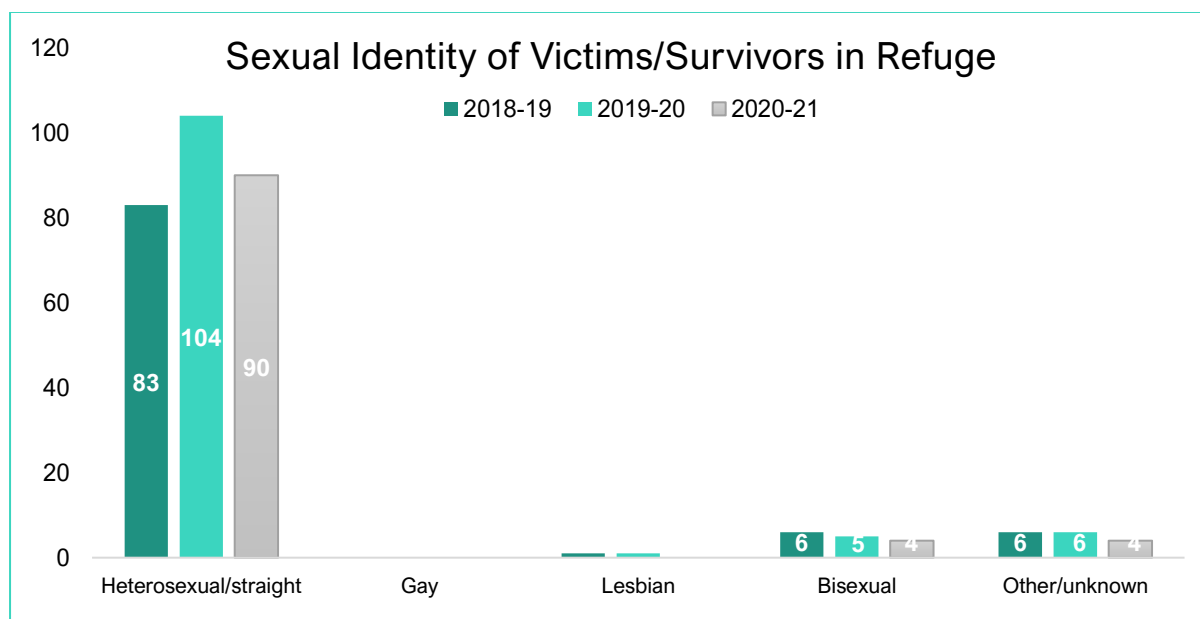
Figure 44: Age of victims/survivors of domestic abuse accessing safe accommodation services



Over the past three years the majority (73%) of victims/survivors of domestic abuse accessing safe accommodation services are aged 25-44 years old (figure 44). There have also been small increases in the number aged 25 to 34 years old. Next Link do not accept anyone into refuge space who is under 18 due to licence agreements. They report having seen a small increase in women over 65 who needed safe house and supported them around their needs and accepted them for rehousing by Local Authorities. All spaces are also only for women, Next Link do not offer any spaces for men in Bristol City.

The majority of victims/ survivors are heterosexual, and a small proportion (6%) identify as LGBT+ (figure 45). There is no specific LGBT refuge in the South West so Next Link supported women in the generic safe house. This was risk assessed for each case and support was put in place around them. Next Link did some training with staff and residents about hate crime which they report was very successful.

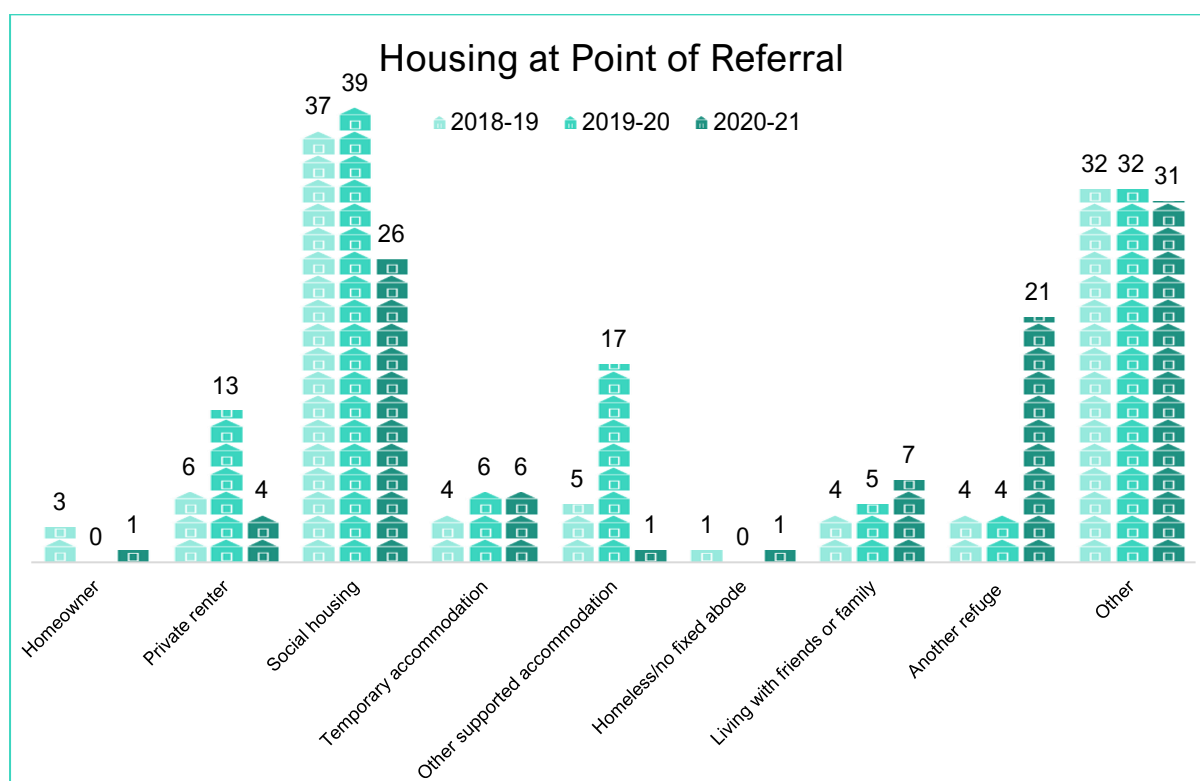
Figure 45: Sexual identity of victims/survivors of domestic abuse accessing safe accommodation services



The most common form of accommodation for a victim/survivor at point of referral was Social Housing (figure 46), however, in 2020/21 this has reduced and there have been increases in clients moving to another Refuge. 27% of all accepted victims/survivors in 2020/21 were living in Social Housing at point of referral and 24% in another Refuge.

Women with existing social housing tenancies can apply for dual Housing Benefit for up to 12 months to retain their tenancy. In this time, Next Link work with their social landlord to look at alternative housing. This is not always available within a year. Next Link have also worked with clients to challenge decisions by their social landlord around Anti-Social Behaviour that was Domestic Abuse related and legal issues over their tenancy.

Figure 46: Housing at point of referral into safe accommodation



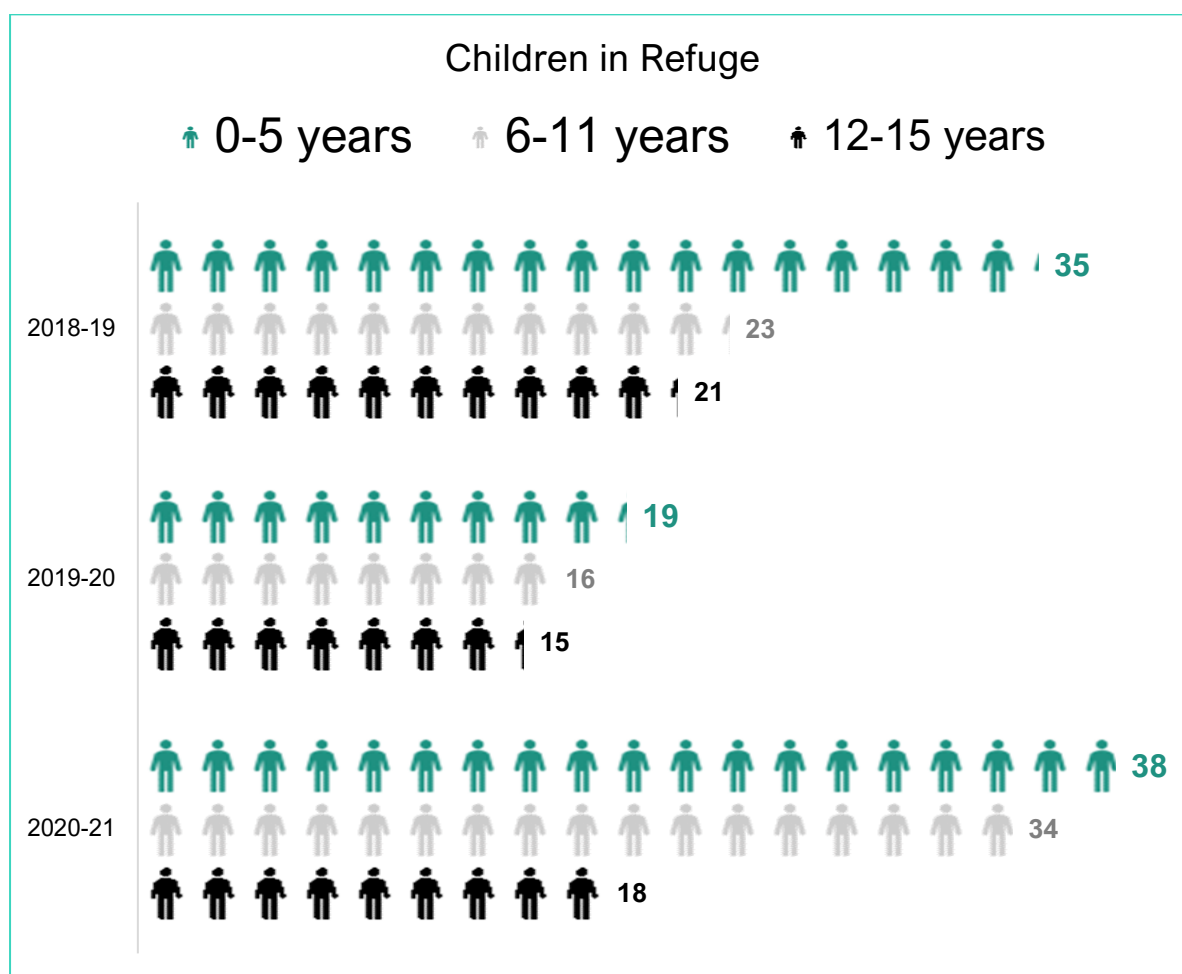
The majority of clients are either single persons or have 1 child (table 46). Next Link Bristol City only have limited refuges for larger families and this can be an issue. Also, some families have adult children and Next Link have supported them in refuge spaces which means they sign their own contract.

Table 45: Household structure of clients accessing safe accommodation

Household Structure	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
0 child household	35	64	35
Pregnant	2	3	6
1 child household	27	30	32
2 children household	20	11	17
3+ children household	12	8	8

The majority of children in Refuge are under 5 years old. 42% of children in Refuge in 2020/21 were under 5 (figure 47).

Figure 47: Ages of children in Refuge



Of all children in refuge, in 2020/21 38 accessed internal support in the refuge (table 47). This type of support was most commonly accessed. Over half of all children accessed support.

Table 46: Type of support being accessed by children in refuge

Children in Refuge accessing support	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Internal support in the refuge (e.g. play therapy, children worker)	35	19	38
External support outside of the refuge via a referral (e.g. CAMHS, counselling)	5	6	8
External support – Child In Need (CIN)	4	2	2
External support – Child Protection (CP) Plan	3	1	1
No support	0	0	0

Across the service the majority of service users were White/ White British (table 48), however the extent varied between the safe house service (57%) and the complex needs safe house (97%). The referrals numbers from those who are Black or Black British have reduced slightly but not significantly, Asian or Asian British client referrals have remained consistent with the exception of a small spike in 2019/20.

Next Link have a specific Black, Asian & minoritised communities safe house. They also celebrate a range of festivals such as Eid and Diwali across all safe houses.

Table 47: Recorded ethnicity of victims/survivors accessing safe accommodation

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
White or White British	63	55	62
Black or Black British	13	7	11
Asian or Asian British	8	11	8
Mixed or Mixed British	4	3	4
Gypsy/Roma/Traveller	1	2	0
Other/unknown	7	6	8

Next Link have supported women to apply for Destitute Domestic Violence (DDV) concession^u as soon as they are accepted into the refuge. They support them to obtain leave to remain. Through Covid-19 this was difficult with less places open, less support and delays. Next Link also work with the asylum team to offer support to families. They set up their own NRPF to support these women.

Those with visas most commonly had spousal visas (table 49). Nine women in 2020/21 in Refuge required an interpreter/ translator.

Table 48: Immigration status of victims/survivors accessing safe accommodation

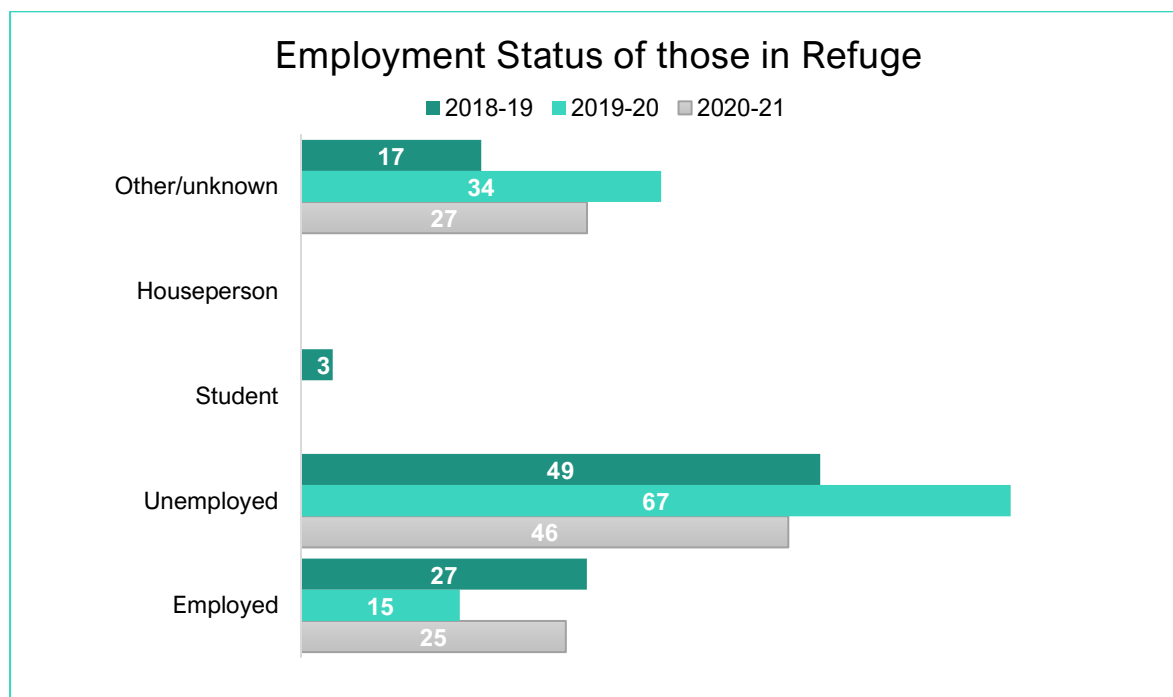
Immigration Status	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Family visa	0	1	5
Spousal visa	6	5	8
Work/student/visit visa	1	0	1
Asylum seeker (public funds not accessible but asylum support accessible)	1	1	0
Refugee (public funds accessible)		0	1
No immigration leave or expired leave	1	0	1
Other/unknown	9	13	7

In 2018/19 51% of victims/survivors were unemployed. This rose to 58% in 2019/20 but has since dropped to 47% in 2020/21, however, the proportion of unknowns have increased (figure 48).

Paying rent for a space in a refuge on a low income can be difficult for some women if they don't get housing benefit. Next Link support them with housing applications into the private sector and obtaining deposits where possible.

^u The DDV concession gives three months' limited leave with access to public funds while the Home Office considers their application for permanent leave to remain. A person who is granted the DDV concession is eligible for homelessness assistance from the Local Authority.

Figure 48: Employment status of those in refuge



A large number of those who report having a disability or health condition report Mental Health issues (table 49). Other health issues identified more commonly were physical disabilities or mobility impairments and learning difficulties.

Table 49: Recorded disability and/or health conditions of victims/ survivors in Refuge

Disability/ Health	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Physical Disability/Mobility Impairment (inc. Wheelchair Access Required):	9	13	8
Sensory Impairment:	0	0	0
Deaf/Hearing Impairment (including Sign Language User or Interpretation Required):	2	1	1
Visual Impairment (including Braille or Other Visual Support Required):	1	0	3
Speech Impairment or Communication Difficulties	0	0	0
Learning Difficulty	8	5	5
Mental Health Issues:	30	24	23
Austism, Asperger's or Other Neuro-Diverse Condition	0	0	0
Personal Care Requirements:	0	0	0
Other Long-Term Health Condition	0	1	7
Children with Health Condition/s:	0	0	0
Other/unknown	0	0	0

Of those with additional support needs, financial support and homelessness was one of the most common needs for victims/survivors referred to Refuge, followed by legal support, substance misuse support. Next Link have two safe houses for women with

complex needs and are considered 'vital' for support around drugs / alcohol and mental health (table 50).

Table 50: Additional support needs of victims/survivors in refuge

Additional Support Needs	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Care Leaver	0	0	0
Service Personnel/Armed Forces	0	0	0
Offending History	5	7	7
Homeless	28	29	30
Rough Sleeper	0	0	0
Alcohol Misuse	15	12	7
Drug Misuse	16	17	13
Legal Support	17	17	23
Financial Support	62	52	56
Other/unknown	0	0	0

3.3 Capacity estimates based on the population

The Council of Europe (COE) estimate that one family refuge space is required per 10,000 residents in the community. Based on the number of adults over the age of 16 in Bristol (n=377,594) the **total number of refuge spaces required is 38 spaces^v**. Currently in Bristol there are 49 units of safe accommodation commissioned through Next Link which is positive as it is higher than the estimated capacity required.

To support decision making we have considered the type of refuge spaces that might be required based on the demographic structure of the community explored in the previous section. **The estimate of need in the table below is higher than the estimated total need as they are based on overall population figures and victims could fall in multiple communities with intersecting needs.** For example, an older male victim with a disability will be counted in three community categories. We recommend that these estimates are used to build on the 16 spaces required for refuge to support decision making of a whole housing approach to safe accommodation by creating options for those fleeing abuse in need of accommodation more broadly.

Table 51: Estimated refuge capacity needs for demographic cohorts

Community	Capacity requirements
Young people	There are 8,353 young people between 16-17 in Bristol and 64,514 between 18-24. As such around 7.2 units of refuge would be appropriate for younger victims. Younger people would be less likely to be homeowners, and more likely to be in lower paid employment which must be considered in terms of accessibility and affordability. Furthermore, a considerable number of young people would not be

^v Rounded up from 37.7

Community	Capacity requirements
	eligible for benefits so appropriate move on pathways will need to be considered.
Older people	There is a total of 79,308 people over the age of 60 in Bristol. Based on this approximately 7.9 units of refuge space should be considered for older victims. For older victims there are more likely to be mobility and health related considerations in terms so mobility will be a key consideration in relation refuge accommodation and dispersed models may be more appropriate.
Disability	We estimate that 91,740 of the population in Bristol will have a disability of some sort. Based on this around 9.1 units of refuge space should be considered for this cohort. Although not all of those individuals will experience physical disabilities it could be beneficial to create these spaces with mobility and accessibility in mind.
Men	In total, there are 188,186 men over the age of 16 in Bristol. To meet the need of this cohort we estimate that around 18.8 units would be required for male victims. The Council of Europe estimate is based on female victims and the concept of disproportionality, so this is not necessarily a robust estimate, but provides a useful guide.
LGBT+	We estimate based on the national average that there will be around 26,430 LGBT+ individuals living in Bristol. Based on this we estimate a refuge capacity need of 2.6 units .
Ethnicity	Based on the 'non-white' population in Bristol based on the 2019 ONS mid-year estimates we can estimate that for the 108,926 Bristol residents there will need to be around 1.8 units available.

The above estimates need to consider intersectionality. For example, a victim may be both LGBTQ+ and from a minoritised community. Many of the units may also be used by more than one group, for example a male victim would be able to use a facility that is also accessible to disabled victims.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a concept often used in critical theories to describe the ways in which oppressive institutions (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, classism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another. This means that when we look at a survivor, we must look at how all facets of their identity interact and recognize that each person's story and needs are unique. Marginalised women and girls can face multiple intersecting inequalities and "*an intersectional approach is necessary in all areas of work relating to ending violence against women and girls*"⁷⁷.

These potential barriers span the inequalities of gender, culture, race, and class. These factors have an effect on the actual experience of domestic and sexual abuse survivors face and their access to the services they need. Some survivors are affected by one or more of these factors, and some by all. There is evidence that women who experience the most extensive abuse and violence (both as children and adults) are more likely to face other adverse circumstances in their lives such as poor mental and physical health, disability, substance misuse, poverty, debt, poor housing and homelessness.⁷⁸

4. Consultation with those with lived experience of domestic abuse

This section provides an overview of our listening exercise with victims and survivors which will help understand a) what they feel is positive about the support they receive b) what challenges they have faced in accessing services. We conducted an online survey of residents locally as well as interviews with victims and survivors.

4.1 Survey results

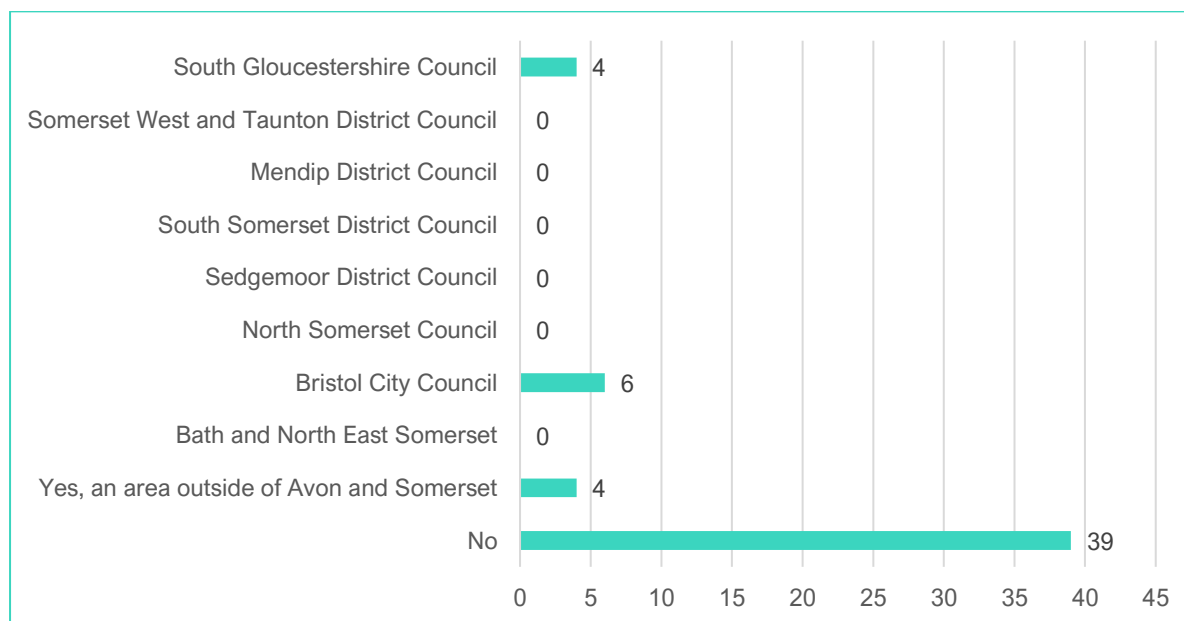
4.1.1 Overview of respondents

Between July and September 2021, an online survey was run for anyone with lived experience of domestic abuse who lives in one of the Local Authority areas in the Avon and Somerset police force region. In total there were 180 responses across the five Tier 1 Local Authority areas.

Overall, 54 victims and survivors from Bristol City gave consent to answering the survey, however not all survivors answered every question. A number of questions in the survey were not mandatory, enabling victims to skip any questions that they may have found triggering or harmful to them. As such, for each question presented in this section we will also refer to how many victims answered that particular question. In order to understand how victims and survivors in Bristol City move around the region, we asked whether survivors had lived in another Local Authority area in the last five years which highlighted most victims (85%^w) had not lived anywhere out and those that had were split equally between areas outside the Avon and Somerset region (8%) or South Gloucestershire Council (8%) (figure 49).

^w N=45 as we have included those that selected 'Bristol City'

Figure 49: Survivors who had lived in another Local Authority area in the last five years



The below (figure 50) highlights the demographics of respondents which should be understood in relation to the limitations of the results. Overall, we had a good response rate in line with the population in most demographic areas however there was an under representation with Black, Asian & minoritised respondents which is not in line with the population. This must be factored into the interpretation of the findings.

As well as collecting data on the demographic characteristics we also asked respondents to tell us more about their socio-economic status in line with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)^x needs assessment template (figure 51).

^x Now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

Figure 50: Demographics of respondents

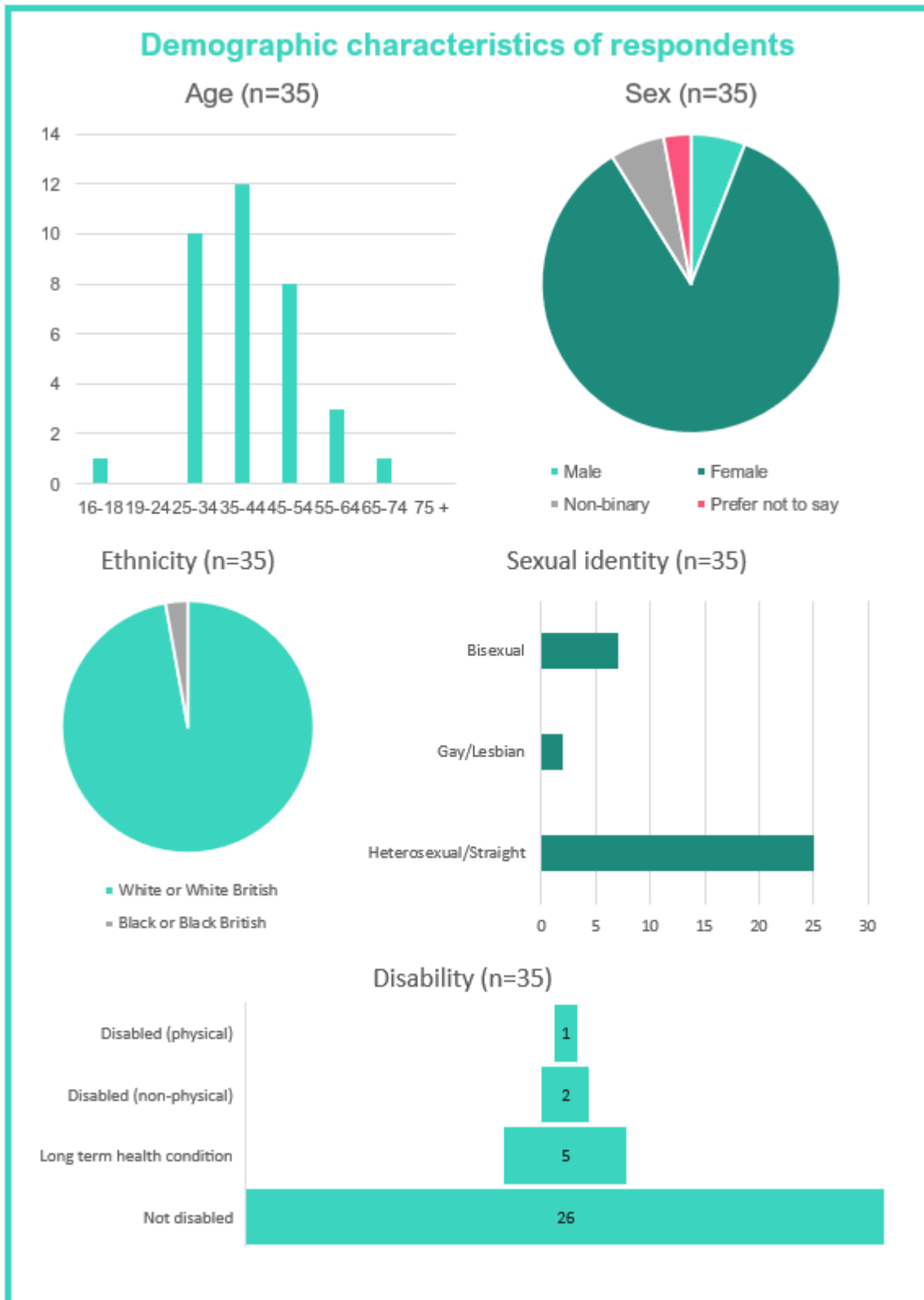
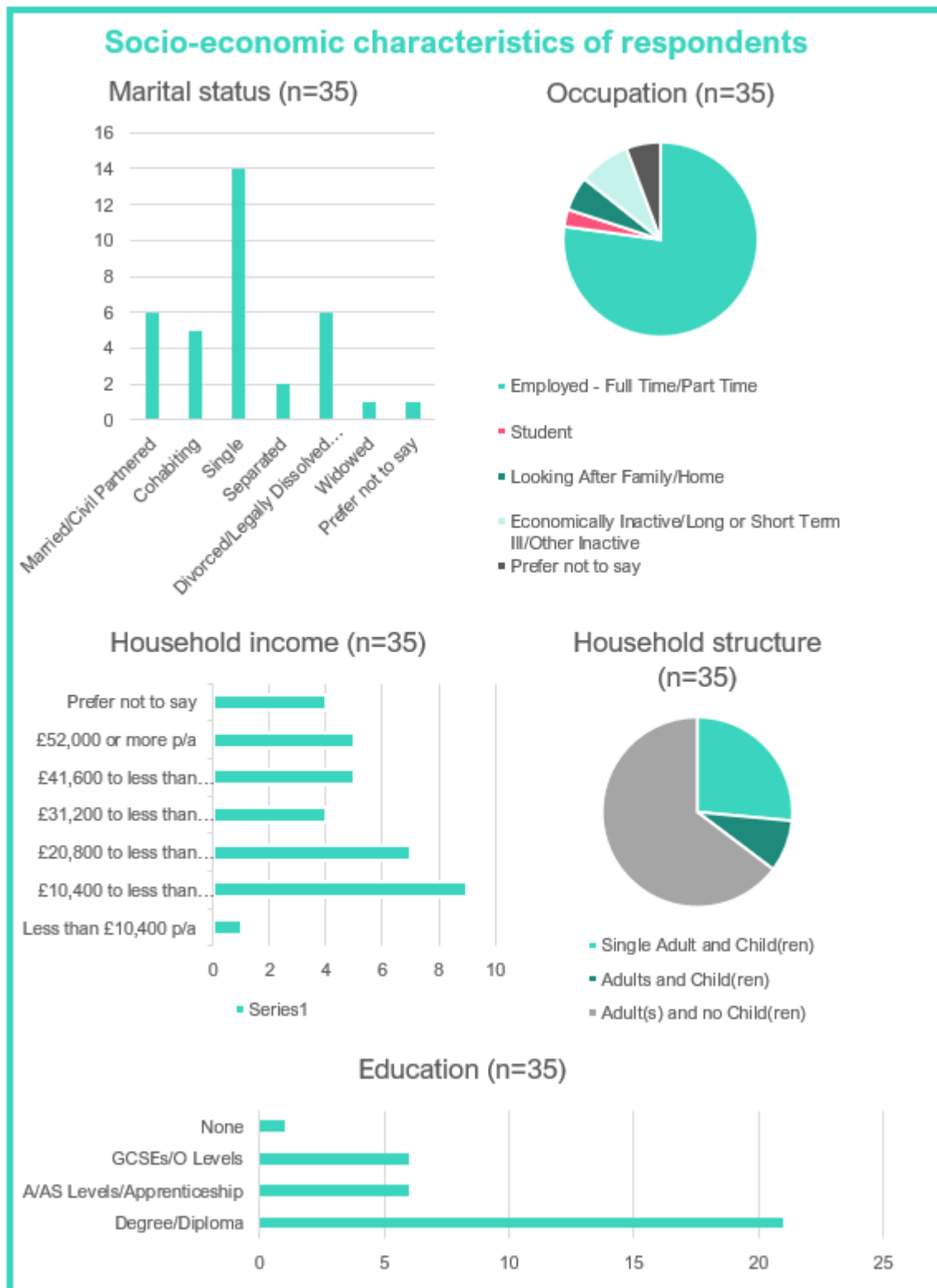


Figure 51: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents



4.1.2 Victims' experiences of domestic abuse in Bristol

At the beginning of the survey, we asked victims and survivors to tell us more about their experiences of domestic abuse. Victim Focus (2021) highlighted a methodological error that occurs often in research when victims are asked about

domestic abuse broadly. How victims define abuse can differ significantly and can mean abuse types considered 'lower level' might not be captured. As such we asked about the specific behaviours perpetrators of abuse had used against victims, and how often to understand the true nature and scale of domestic abuse. We asked questions in three broad categories:

- Non-physical abuse
- Physical violence
- Sexual abuse and violence.

It is vital that this section is read contextually. There is no intention within this section to consider any form of domestic abuse as 'lower level' and the experiences of abuse and impact on victims can be detrimental irrespective of the type of abuse they have experienced. The aim of this section rather, is to understand the nature of abuse so we can begin to understand the response, and specific support needs victims might have. When we use the term 'lower level' or refer to severity we mean behaviours that; i) research has highlighted victims and survivors might consider as less serious, such as those that do not involve physical violence, ii) those that do not meet a criminal threshold or iii) have not been highlighted as a homicide risk factor on the DASH risk assessment.

Experiences of non-physical abuse

It is important to understand non-physical abuse experiences by victims as it can significantly impact their ability to access services and support. The Duluth model^y (1981) is a common framework used to understand the dynamics of domestic abuse (figure 52). It suggests that perpetrators will most often use non-physical abuse as a form of power and control over victims, only escalating to physical and sexual violence when the non-physical tactics do not work. Key to the model is the idea that the constant threat of physical or sexual violence enables the non-physical behaviours to work as a control mechanism as victims and survivors will seek to avoid escalation. The below power and control wheel is used as an example to highlight the wide range of non-physical tactics a perpetrator may use.

Non-physical abuse is important to understand in a local area needs assessment as it can help to highlight the barriers victims and survivors may face in accessing services. For example, where behaviours such as monitoring victims' communication is present, it would make support over the phone or via a helpline inaccessible.

^y <https://www.theduluthmodel.org/what-is-the-duluth-model/>

Figure 52: The Duluth model power and control wheel



This section will consider the non-physical abuse experiences of victims and survivors in Bristol. Non-physical abuse was the most common form of domestic abuse in terms of frequency and commonality. Of the different types of abuse the most commonly experienced behaviours were:

- Shouted at you (92% had experienced)
- Isolating from friends and family (84% had experienced)
- Humiliated in front of others (76% had experienced)/

Being shouted at was not only the most commonly experienced but also experienced most frequently by survivors with 82% experiencing it more than 10 times.

Table 52: Has a partner or ex-partner ever done any of the things listed below? (n=50)

Type of abuse	Total percentage experienced	Frequency of the experience					
		Never	Once	2-3 times	More than 3 times	More than 10 times	Unsure/do not want to answer
Shouted at you	92%	3	0	2	3	41	1
Unfairly controlled your access to money or how you spend it	60%	19	2	7	5	15	2
Isolated you from your friends and family	84%	8	5	9	4	24	0
Forced me out of work, employment or volunteering	26%	33	6	5	0	2	4

Type of abuse	Total percentage experienced	Frequency of the experience					
		Never	Once	2-3 times	More than 3 times	More than 10 times	Unsure/do not want to answer
Destroyed your property	52%	23	6	4	10	6	1
Monitored your letters, phone calls, emails, texts or social media	72%	11	2	10	9	15	3
Enforced rules or activities	64%	15	2	6	8	16	3
Humiliated you in front of others	76%	10	2	8	16	12	2
Made threats to harm you	68%	14	4	5	13	12	2
Threatened to tell your friends or family personal information about you	60%	20	3	6	11	9	1
Threatened to harm your friends or family	28%	34	1	4	5	4	2
Took credit, finance, mortgage or bills out in my name	28%	36	4	1	4	5	0
Kept track of where you went or how you spent your time	74%	12	1	7	11	18	1
Threatened to kill you	40%	29	5	8	2	5	1
Used derogatory terms about your identity (such as homophobic or racist remarks)	50%	24	4	5	7	7	3

Experiences of physical abuse and violence

Physical abuse and violence was not experienced as commonly as non-physical abuse in Bristol, however it remains highly prevalent. From our sample in terms of violence the most commonly experienced of behaviours were behaviours that might be considered of 'lesser severity' such as pushing and grabbing. These are the types of behaviours that might mean some victims do not feel their experience is 'domestic abuse' as they are not always considered 'violence' as is demonstrated (right) by a quote from one respondent. The behaviours were:

- Being pushed (76% experienced)
- Being grabbed (76% experienced).

There was still a considerable amount of physical violence with severity too with over half (54%) being hit, punched or slapped and 30% requiring medical attention for injuries the perpetrator had caused (table 53).

Table 53: Has a partner or ex-partner ever done any of the things listed below? (n=50)

Type of abuse	Total percentage experienced	Frequency of the experience					
		Never	Once	2-3 times	More than 3 times	More than 10 times	Unsure/do not want to answer
Hit, punched or slapped you	54%	22	5	5	7	10	1
Pushed you	76%	12	6	10	12	10	0
Kicked you	26%	36	3	2	2	6	1
Forced or manipulated you to use alcohol or drugs	24%	37	0	6	3	3	1
Strangled, attempted to strangle or choked you	46%	26	13	4	4	2	1
Used a weapon against you	22%	38	4	4	2	1	1
Grabbed you	76%	12	8	11	8	11	0
Withheld medication or access to healthcare	18%	40	2	4	2	1	1
Caused injuries that you required medical support for	30%	33	6	6	1	2	2

Experiences of sexual abuse and violence

Based on our survey sexual abuse and violence was the least commonly experienced form of domestic abuse. However, of those that did experience sexual abuse or violence, rape and sexual assault was the most common.

- Manipulating or forcing someone to engage in sex or sexual activity:** We have purposely avoided using terms such as sexual assault or rape within the survey as research has shown there is a considerable stigma attached to both, but moreover many victims of these do not define their experiences as 'true rape' or 'true sexual assault' if they have internalised rape myths (Victim Focus, 2020). Instead, we asked victims about being either manipulated or physically forced in to sex or sexual activity. In Bristol 67% of victims had been manipulated into sex or sexual activity and 40% had been physically forced. This would suggest 2 in 5 victims of domestic abuse experience physically aggressive rape.

Table 54: Has a partner or ex-partner ever done any of the things listed below? (n=48)

Type of abuse	Total percentage experienced	Frequency of the experience					
		Never	Once	2-3 times	More than 3 times	More than 10 times	Unsure/do not want to answer
Touched or kissed you without your consent	46%	25	4	4	6	8	1
Manipulated you in to engaging in sex or sexual activity	67%	15	3	8	9	12	1
Forced you to watch pornography	19%	38	3	4	2	0	1
Physically forced you to into sex or sexual activity	40%	28	8	3	6	2	1
Threatened to harm you sexually	10%	41	1	2	2	0	2
Forced you to photograph or film sexual activity; or filmed you without your consent	23%	36	5	1	4	1	1
Threatened to share sexual photographs or videos of you	19%	38	5	2	2	0	1
Shared sexual photographs or videos of you	6%	39	2	0	0	1	6

4.1.3 Help seeking behaviour of victims in Bristol

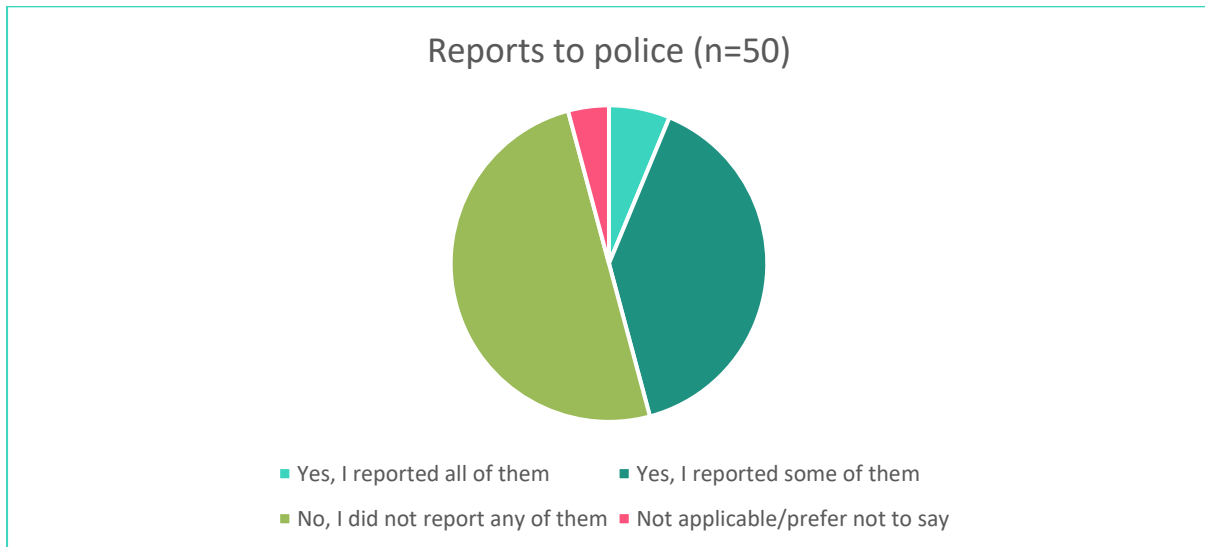
To design policy and commission services that meet the needs of victims it is essential to understand how victims seek help so that the pathways can be made as accessible as possible. This section seeks to explore how the victims in our sample sought help, including who they told about the abuse and where they would be likely to go for help and support. The next section will explore the type of support they require.

Seeking help from a professional or organisation

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) highlights that only 18% of victims report domestic abuse to the police, so our sample is higher than the national average in terms of police contact (figure 53). In our sample this was higher with 44% reporting

incidents, however of those that did report the abuse only 6% (n=3) reported all incidents

Figure 53: Reports to police

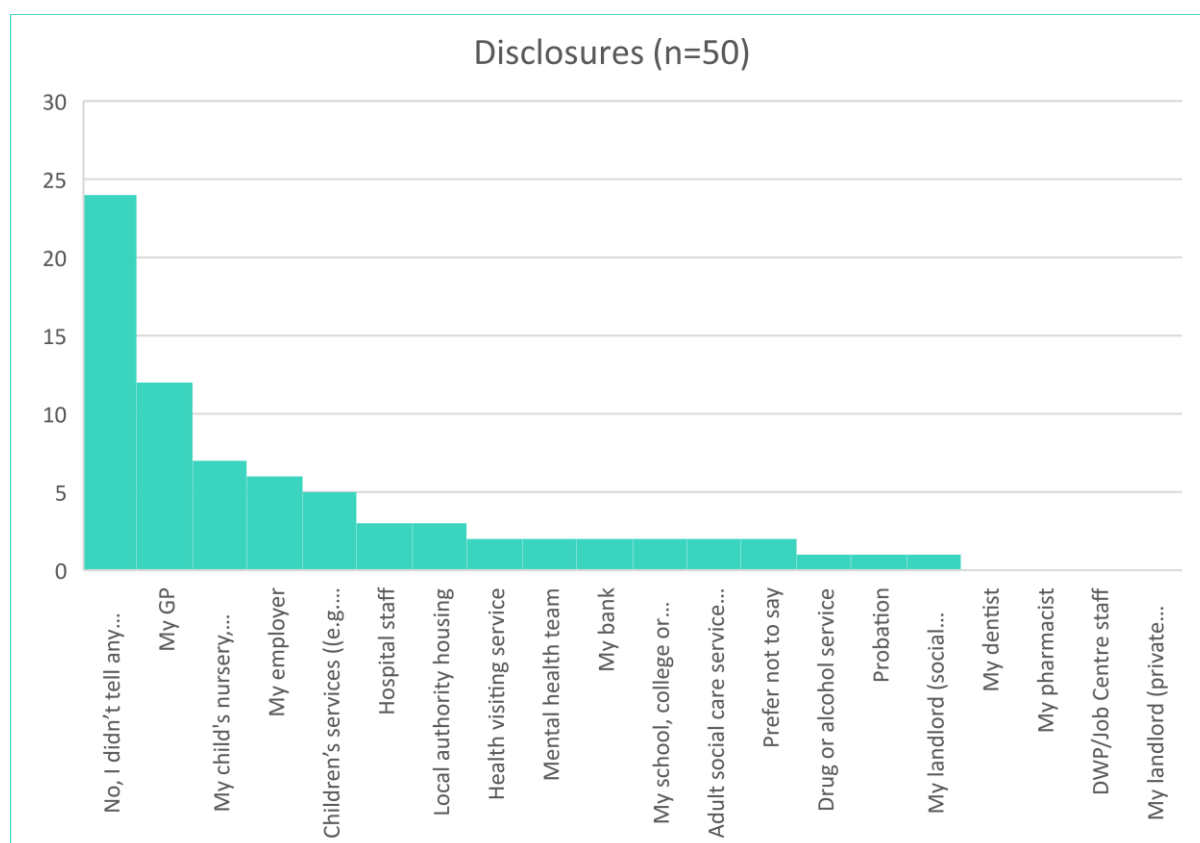


Because less than one in ten victims report abuse to the police it is vital we understand which organisations victims do reach out to. The most common sector a victim would disclose their experience to was:

- Their GP (24%)
- Child's education setting (14%)
- Employer (12%).

Despite some victims and survivors disclosing to professionals, almost half (48%) would not tell anyone making it the most common response which highlights a challenge for Bristol in terms of increasing confidence in help seeking (figure 54).

Figure 54: Where respondents made disclosures of domestic abuse

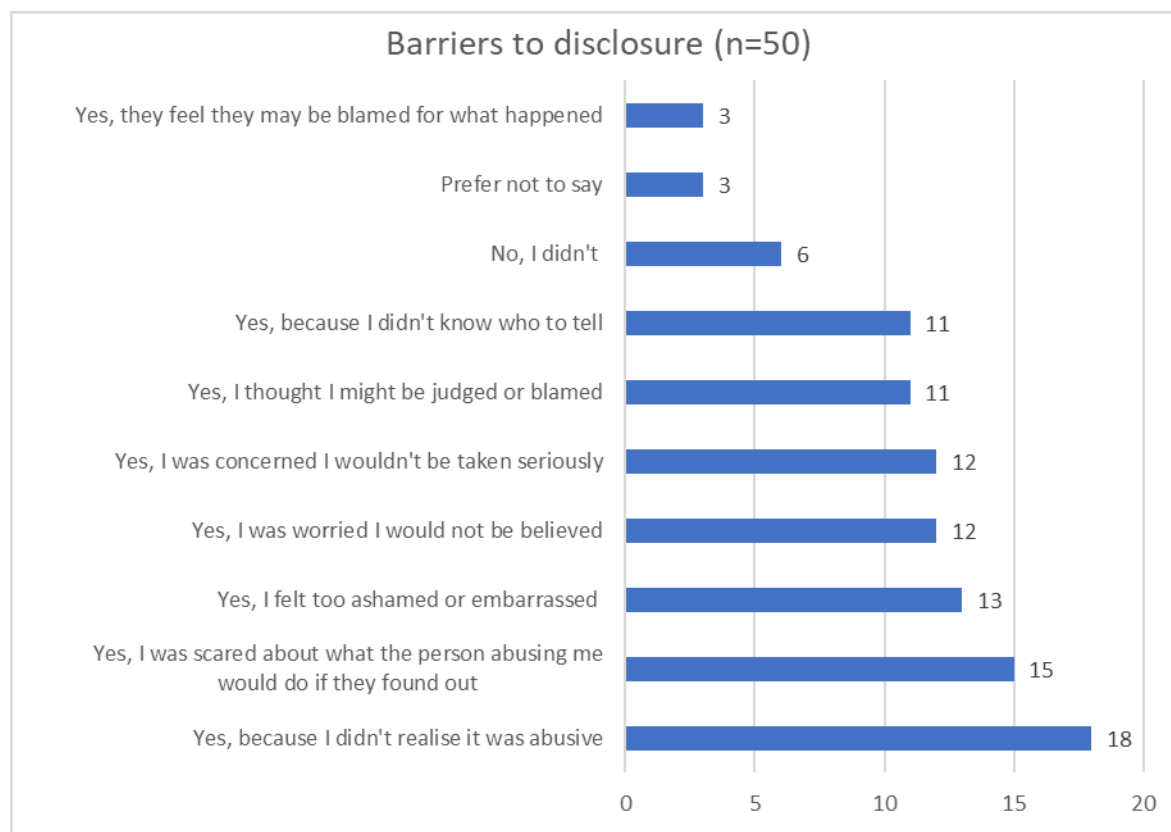


There are several barriers that prevent victims from disclosing their experience and seeking help. In fact, SafeLives Insights data found that it takes an average of three years before victim's access services. Understanding these barriers as part of a need's assessment can help ensure that targeted work to break down or remove barriers through the way services are advertised, or local campaigns could help get victims the right help, sooner.

We asked victims in Bristol about the type of things they found to be a barrier in speaking about their experience or seeking help, from the responses it is clear that victims often face multiple barriers to seeking help (figure 55). The most commonly experienced barriers for victims were:

1. That they did not realise it was domestic abuse (36%)
2. They were scared of what the person abusing them would do if they found out (30%)
3. They felt ashamed or embarrassed (26%).

Figure 55: Barriers to disclosure



We collected some feedback from survivors about their experience of disclosing to professionals and found that some survivors felt dismissed:

- *Police dismissed some of the coercive control aspects as "my wife doesn't like the way I drive.." "lots of men don't get on with their mother in law.." etc.*
- *Abusive behaviour was linked to mental health problems in my partner and there was no way to get them help within the relationship only to report them as a victim.*
- *At first they were very unhelpful, as time went on I found the right help but it took a long time.*
- *Police just advised court injunction even though I showed them all the bruising from punch to face and attempted strangulation.*
- *Most were dismissive, without a care about what was happening.*
- *My ex was incredibly charming. When I told the police what happened he told a different policewoman lies about me which she believed, even though he was much older and on probation for knife crime and I had never done anything wrong. He knew that I needed my DBS for work so I had no choice but to drop all charges so that he wouldn't continue his.*
- *When reported the physical attack to the police the next day, their first response was to ask why I didn't call them at the time. Not the response you need after working up the courage to make the report.*
- *GP just said that the injury wasn't serious.*

Some survivors did get a response that they were happy with including a survivor who was referred to refuge:

- *I was signed posted to domestic violence support group and placed in a house with other victims of DV.*
- *Police were supportive.*
- *Helped with therapy.*
- *Everyone was supportive and believed me and helped me and my children to get away from him.*
- *Galop were great, really inclusive and understanding. Helped me to make a plan to keep myself safe, and to leave the relationship.*

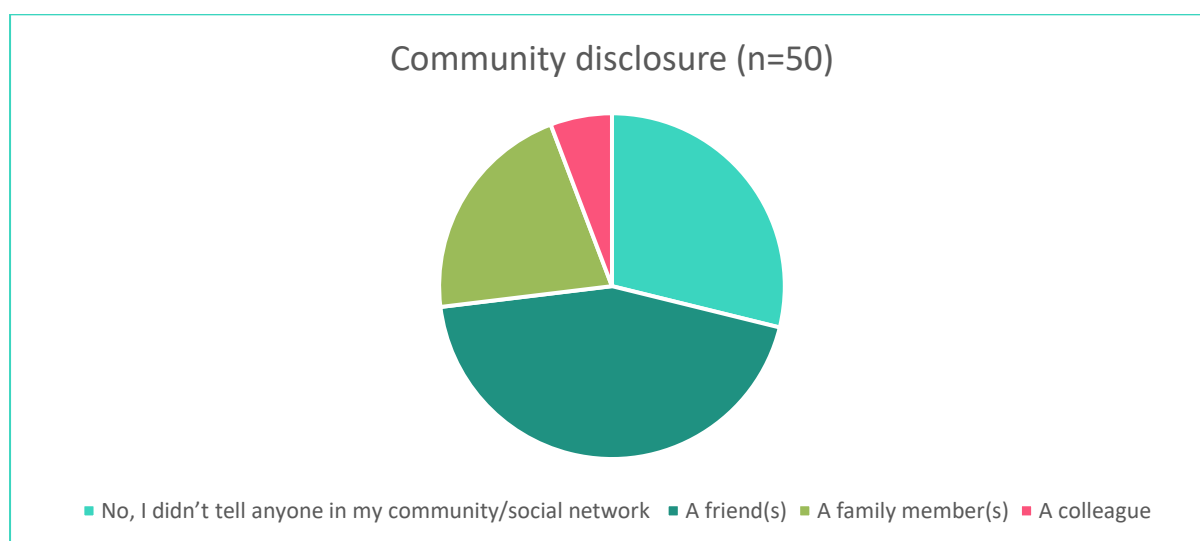
In terms of learning around the response to perpetrators, one survivor discussed how she was removed by the police so that the perpetrator could 'calm down':

- *The couple of times I contacted the police they just took my ex away but never arrested him, even knowing he had lots of records. One time I was the one taken to the police station at 1am, so he calms down at home, I stayed there until 7am, I was 6 weeks pregnant.*

Seeking help within their community network



Some survivors sought help and support within the community with 46% telling a friend about what was happening (figure 56). The second most common disclosure point was family with 22% disclosing to family members. This highlights that survivors in Bristol are twice as likely to tell a friend than family member about domestic abuse.

Figure 56: Community disclosure



Some victims reported, as per the table below, feeling reassured and validated by their community networks however some reported difficulties in them understanding the dynamics of domestic abuse.

Table 55: Experiences of seeking help from community networks

 Positive experiences of seeking help from community networks	 Negative experiences of seeking help from community networks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Family member kept records so there was evidence if it all went wrong or got further out of control.</i> ● <i>All friends and family very helpful, donated clothing, furniture toys etc to start again. Many very surprised because I'd put a brave face on for such a long time and seemed like I was succeeding in life/supermum when in fact I wanted to die because I feel so trapped in my life.</i> ● <i>All supported me.</i> ● <i>Helpful.</i> ● <i>Very supportive, discussed solutions and accessed help.</i> ● <i>Helpful and supportive.</i> ● <i>Signed posted to local support groups.</i> ● <i>Again believing me, telling me it wasn't my fault.</i> ● <i>They told me to finish the relationship or to report him for things I never said to police.</i> ● <i>Very supportive, and encouraging to report to the police when I was toying with whether I should or not</i> ● <i>supportive chats.</i> ● <i>They kept on and on until I got help.</i> ● <i>Helpful was being told it wasn't okay to have to experience these things and that it wasn't my fault.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>I wasn't or didn't feel able to tell them everything because I knew I should get out of the relationship and I was scared to do that.</i> ● <i>1 friend stopped talking to me, another friend was very supportive.</i> ● <i>No support from family member.</i> ● <i>They reacted in a way that made me think it wasn't abusive, so I didn't tell anyone until years later.</i> ● <i>unhelpful was saying why didn't you tell me sooner, and trying to get me to go to a service for straight women who wouldn't have a clue about my life.</i>

4.1.4 Support needs of victims and survivors in Bristol

The previous section considered how victims seek help, this section will build on what we have learned and begin to explore the support needs victims have and what they would like good support to look like. The most important aspects of a support to people in Bristol are:

- Confidentiality
- 24-hour service
- Evening availability
- Flexible service
- The choice between a male/female worker.

Table 56: Victims' perspectives on what is important in support services

	Not important at all	Somewhat important	Very important
Evening availability	1	11	24
Text support	1	11	19
24-hour service	2	4	27
Fixed appointments	7	16	8
Drop in	1	13	14
Disability access	11	5	17
One to one support - face to face	0	11	19
One to one support - online	2	9	20
Flexible service	0	11	23
Confidential	0	2	37
Different languages available	10	9	14
Help with transport	15	9	8
Support that comes to you (either at home or somewhere in the community)	7	14	7
The choice between a male or female worker	5	5	23

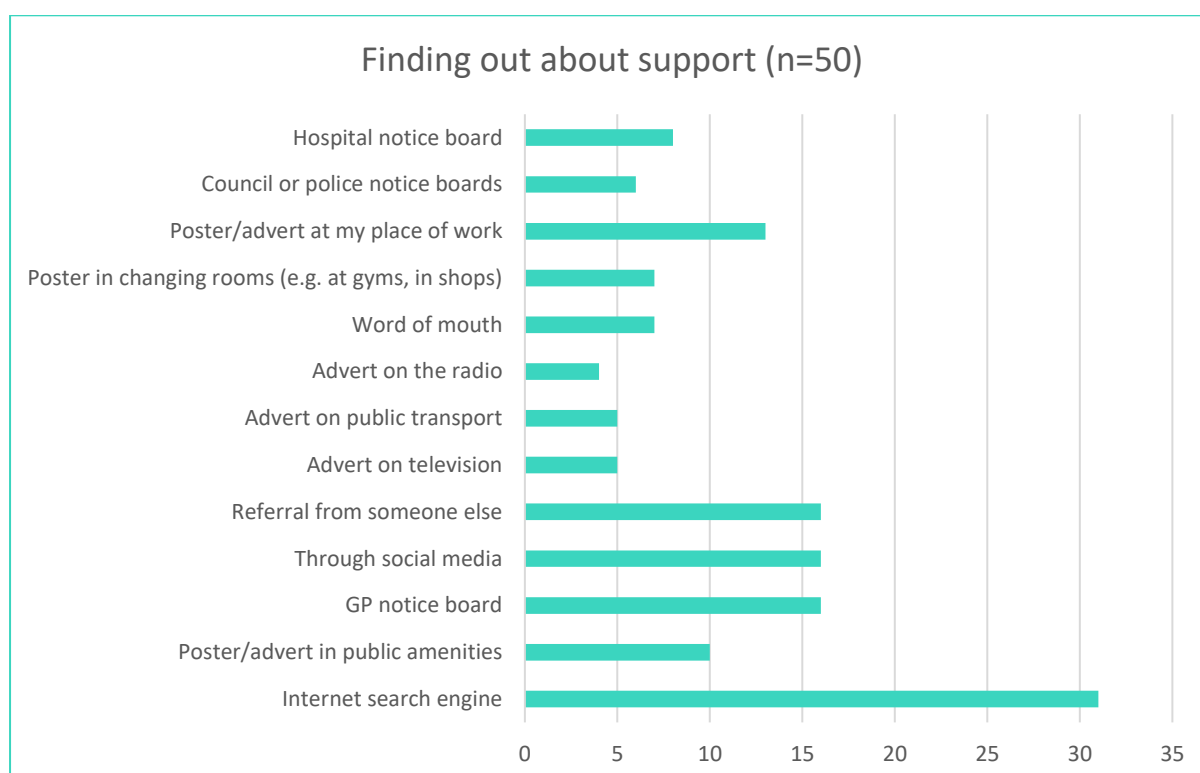
The most common thing that victims and survivors wanted support with was mental health (62%). In terms of understanding the safe accommodation needs of victims in Bristol, the second most common support need was support to keep them safe within their own home with 32% of the victims responding to the survey stating they would have liked help with protection measures to enable them to stay in their home. This suggests that more survivors in Bristol would like to remain in their home than flee.

Over a quarter of victims wanted support in terms of their children's wellbeing and legal support and advice. In terms of the former this highlights the need for mental health related support to extend to children and young people living in households where domestic abuse is present as well as victims. This reflects the new Domestic

Abuse Act (2021) which recognises in law for the first time, the status of children as victims in their own right.

In terms of where victims and survivors would look to get help and support, most would use an internet search engine or social media. Aside from this, more traditional forms of awareness such as notice boards were also a common place survivors would look whether this is at a GP surgery, notice board at the council/police building or in public amenities.

Figure 57: Finding out about support for domestic abuse



B. What should we do next?

5. Summary of learning and recommendations

This section provides an overview of the learning points throughout the needs assessment with a specific focus on learning, gaps and unmet need. This section will provide a number of recommendations for Bristol City Council and partners to take forward to strengthen the response to domestic abuse, particularly in relation to safe accommodation. We will focus this section on:

- Systems learning and gaps
- Prevalence and demand
- Conclusions and recommendations.

5.1 Systems learning and gaps

5.1.1 Disclosing domestic abuse

Disclosing domestic abuse is often the first step to seeking the help and support survivors need. Based on our survey almost half (48%) of survivors from Bristol would not tell anyone making it the most common response which highlights a challenge for Bristol in terms of increasing confidence in help seeking. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) highlights that only 18% of victims report domestic abuse to the police, so our sample is higher than the national average in terms of police contact. In our sample this was higher with 44% reporting incidents, however of those that did report the abuse only 6% (n=3) reported all incidents.

Several barriers were identified that prevent victims from disclosing their experience and seeking help. The most commonly experienced barriers for victims were: not realising it was domestic abuse, feeling scared of what the person abusing them would do if they found out or feeling too ashamed or embarrassed. The non-physical forms of abuse made it difficult for them to disclose as they were not always clear whether the behaviours were abusive. In each of these examples the survivors only realised the behaviour was abuse once it had escalated to a point of physical abuse. This highlights the important need for commissioners to work with commissioned domestic abuse services to promote and raise awareness of the services in a way that would break these barriers down which could include using case study examples of what domestic abuse may look like in terms of the non-physical tactics perpetrators use. Where survivors did disclose their experience to a professional it was most likely a GP or their child's educational setting. This can help commissioners to consider how specialist services are supported to develop partnerships within these settings through training, promotion within the setting (e.g. posters) as well as possible colocation.

Recommendations

- The domestic abuse partnership should work with the office for the police and crime commissioner and police force to gather satisfaction feedback from victims that report to the police to understand how likely they would be to report again.
- Bristol domestic abuse partnership should work with regional partners to develop a public awareness campaign focussing on improved awareness within the population around the dynamics of domestic abuse, and that non-physical violence is still abuse.
- Bristol commissioners should work with commissioned domestic abuse providers to develop a local campaign which highlights relationships where domestic abuse has not been physical to increase identification and help seeking, this will hopefully also address the stigma survivors note about feeling embarrassed or ashamed.
- Bristol local domestic abuse partnership should review current communications and campaigns across all services to ensure there are clear messages that domestic abuse can happen to anyone, with a range of people including those in employment as 'professionals' as well as a range of diversity demographics. This should focus on reducing survivors' feelings of shame and embarrassment by highlighting the prevalence of abuse for all groups.
- Bristol commissioners should work with commissioned domestic abuse providers to review colocation within setting across the area to ensure there is adequate pathways with GP and educational settings as these are where most survivors would disclose.

5.1.2 Support requirements

The most commonly referenced support need in Bristol by a considerable margin was mental health related support with 62% of victims responding to the survey requiring it. From Next Link service users accessing refuge those with additional support needs, financial support and homelessness was one of the most common needs for victims/survivors referred to refuge, followed by legal support, substance misuse support. Next Link have two safe houses for women with complex needs and are considered 'vital' for support around drugs/alcohol and mental health.

Perpetrators using economic abuse is common in Bristol with 60% of survivors responding to the survey experiencing the perpetrator controlling their access to finances and over a quarter being forced out of employment or education. From the survey 22% of victims would have liked help and support around their finances. The impact of economic abuse can be long term and significantly impact survivors' ability

to be free from abuse, particularly in terms of safe accommodation. The local domestic abuse partnership should work to develop robust partnerships between domestic abuse specialist services and local organisations working around finance, debt and legal to ensure the long-term impact of economic abuse is mitigated.

The most important element of service provision from across the survey and interviews was the confidentiality of support services. As such commissioners should work with providers to ensure promotion of provision focuses on the fact that it is confidential. Other factors including ensuring the service is able to be flexible which some survivors highlighted needed to be 24 hours and include evening access.

Recommendations

- Commissioners should ensure domestic abuse service provision directly offers, or has established pathways with mental health services as this is the highest support need identified throughout the needs assessment. As per the previous recommendation, this could include colocation models.
- Domestic abuse services should be developed with clear pathways with the financial, debt and legal sector locally so that survivors have access to meeting their practical economic needs which was a significant support need identified.
- The local partnership should review the current governance structure and membership and ensure that the Board includes representatives from financial, debt and legal sectors and clear working agreements between sectors.
- Commissioners should work with the local commissioned services to ensure all communications and promotional activity is clear about the confidentiality aspects of the service as this was the most important factor of support for survivors.

5.1.3 Accessing safe accommodation

The homelessness pathway

There were 5,508 homeless applications in total, 7.5% (n=418) of which were households with domestic abuse. This is slightly less than the national average would suggest in which 1 in 11 households (8.7%) recorded domestic abuse as their main reason for being homeless or threatened with homelessness. This would also mean, based on our estimated prevalence presented in the last section based on the Crime Survey for England and Wales, that only around 2% of the estimated 19,960 victims in Bristol City will present as homeless.

Of domestic abuse victims presenting as homeless the majority of applicants (n=243, 58%) were single people presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse and a further 175 of those presenting with domestic abuse had children. The majority (79%, n=330)

of domestic abuse victims/ survivors were owed relief duty with the second most common duty being the main duty which 119 domestic abuse victims/ survivors were owed.

Staying safe in your own home

Just under a third (32%) of survivors wanted to remain safe in their own home which was slightly more than those who wanted to flee (24%). In any case even where survivors do move, they can lose their tenure status which highlights the need for a whole housing approach which includes options such as management transfers within provider stock, as well as reciprocal arrangements between providers. This would considerably increase the options available to survivors in Bristol.

Recommendations

- The local domestic abuse partnership should review its membership to ensure the right level of representation from across the housing sector including registered providers, housing options and representatives from wider social and private landlords in order to develop a whole housing approach.
- The local partnership should work with housing options and advice to review the data from housing to ensure all demographic data is captured to ensure a good overview of demand and need.
- The local partnership should work with housing options and advice to review homelessness applications as there are slightly less than the national average. This could be due to mis recording data.
- Commissioners should work with specialist domestic abuse providers to create pathways within housing providers with the specialist service to ensure victims have outreach support to enable them to stay safely within their own home. This could include a direct mechanism from when a DVPN/O is issued for wrap around support.
- Bristol domestic abuse partnership should work with other regional Local Authorities and Avon and Somerset police to ensure target hardening and the use of protective orders such as DVPN/O's are included within local data collection dashboards. This should include the number applied for, demographics of the victim/perpetrator and support and signposting undertaken.

5.1.4 Perpetrator management

The majority of perpetrators are still not being held accountable through the criminal justice system. Only 40% of domestic abuse reported to the police ends in a perpetrator being arrested, and only 12% result in a positive charging decision. There is work to be done to improve this. We know through probation data that perpetrators

in Bristol^z have a wide range of needs with around half of the cohort having identified support needs around substance use with alcohol being slightly more common (55%) than drug use (47%). In addition to this, the demographic that access probation are considerably more likely than the general population to have a disability, but due to limitations in data systems it is not clear what the nature of these disabilities are.

It is vital that commissioners work to understand this picture as these barriers could have an impact on the ability of behavioural change work to take place. In addition, although they will not cause domestic abuse, these factors could increase the risk posed to victims through escalation. The high level of complex needs perpetrators present with must be considered throughout commissioning decision making in terms of the type of programmes and interventions that would be most appropriate.

We also found that there are needs for perpetrators to be considered in terms of a whole housing approach. Probation data indicated that 48% of DA perpetrators had an accommodation criminogenic need and 37% required support around finances. These factors could cause perpetrators to continue contact and attempting to reside with victims as the only option. As such discussions across the partnership should explore how perpetrators are accommodated to increase the safety of victims.

Recommendations

- A high proportion of perpetrators through probation appear to have a disability. The local partnership should work with the PDU to break this data down further and identify whether adapted support would be required to achieve behavioural change.
- Commissioners should work with substance use and mental health services locally to ensure pathways of support are available and skilled to work with perpetrators of domestic abuse, including knowledge of the referral pathways into perpetrator provision, given the high level of complex needs identified through the needs assessment.
- Bristol domestic abuse partnership should review the outcomes for perpetrators after a DVPN/O has expired to track whether they return to the home or move on.
- The local domestic abuse partnership should review the accommodation pathways for perpetrators to ensure there are enforcement options to keep them away from the survivor's home.

5.2 Prevalence and demand in Bristol

5.2.1 Prevalence and capacity requirements

In 2020 the total population in Bristol was 463,377. To estimate the prevalence of domestic abuse we consider the population aged over 16 in line with the statutory

^z Note that the probation PDU includes South Gloucestershire so this is representative rather than absolute.

definition of domestic abuse. There are 377,594 individuals aged 16 or over in Bristol of which we can estimate around 67,150 will have experienced domestic abuse over their lifetime. On an annual basis, this equates to 19,960 individuals every year who experience domestic abuse (both familial and intimate partner violence). Police data highlights that in Bristol 35% of all violent offences are domestic abuse related.

Domestic abuse is one of the biggest safeguarding concerns for children and families in Bristol. In fact, 17% of all children social care referrals relate to domestic abuse which is almost 2 in 5 families. We also found that over half (55%) of children who become looked after in Bristol have experienced domestic abuse. This highlights the crucial need for support services at both an early intervention level as well as statutory need to consider the best ways to support non abusive parents, whilst removing the risk (perpetrators).

Age

Police data highlights that the 25-to-34-year age banding forms the largest age group of domestic abuse victims, accounting for 31% of the total in the most recent year.

In Bristol there are 158,650^{aa} children and young people between the ages of 0-24. Of those 94,136 were under the age of 18 so legally defined as children. Overall, 20.3% (n=94,136) of the population in Bristol are under the age of 18 which is in line with the national average which indicates that 21%^{bb} of the overall population of England and Wales.

Based on the population of young people in Bristol we estimate that 6,340 young people between 16-24^{cc} will experience domestic abuse every year. Of those around a quarter (n=800, 12.6%) will be 16–17-year-olds. Children on a child protection plan due to domestic abuse differed in age depending on whether they were male or female. The majority of female children on a plan were aged 1-9 whereas the majority of males were aged 5-15. Overall based on the population of young people against the Council of Europe (COE) recommendations around 7.2 units of refuge would be appropriate for younger victims.

In total there are 79,308 people over the age of 60 in Bristol which makes up 17% of the total population^{dd}. This is slightly lower than the national average in which around 22% of the population. Based on the age of the population in Bristol we estimate around 2,570 individuals over the age of 60 will experience domestic abuse every

^{aa} Office for national statistics mid-year estimates (2020)

^{bb} Census (2011)

^{cc} This is based on the number of young people in the population from the ONS (2020) mid year estimates and the prevalence amongst young people in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020).

^{dd} ONS (2020) mid-year estimates

year^{ee}. Again, based on the COE estimates commissioners may like to consider proportioning approximately 7.9 units of refuge space for older victims.

Sex

Based on the population split of men and women in Bristol, we estimate that there are 13,380 female, and 6,580 male victims of domestic abuse each year^{ff}. In terms of refuge provision, we could estimate that around 18.8 units would be required for male victims, although the COE estimate may not be completely accurate as it was based on female victims.

In each of the past 3-years, female victims have consistently accounted for approximately 70% of all domestic abuse victims reporting to the police in Bristol City. This is generally in line with our estimated prevalence in the previous section which suggested around 67% of victims are likely to be female based on the sex demographic across Bristol. This suggests that male victims locally feel able to report their experiences to the police.

Overall, 76% of homeless applicants experiencing domestic abuse were female. Our prevalence estimates in the previous section suggest that around 32% of victims are likely to be male which would mean they are underrepresented within the homelessness pathway. Of those on the housing register, 92% were female and the majority were aged 26 to 45 years old. In terms of children on child protection plans due to domestic abuse males and females are equally represented.

Sexual orientation

Based on the national estimate of 7% of the population identifying as LGBT, we can estimate that there are around 26,430 individuals in Bristol that identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer/questioning. Based on the COE recommendations we can estimate a refuge capacity need of 2.6 units.

Based on this we estimate in Bristol that there will be around 2,410 victims of domestic abuse within the LGB+ community every year. There are very few organisations who record sexual orientation of victims and perpetrators in Bristol, which is common across the Avon and Somerset region. There is no police recorded data around sexual orientation.

The majority of domestic abuse victims/survivors presenting as homeless were heterosexual, five were Gay/Lesbian, and a large proportion were unknown.

^{ee} This is based on the number of young people in the population from the ONS (2020) mid year estimates and the prevalence amongst older people in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020) for over 75 we have used SafeLives estimates based on Insights data (2020).

^{ff} This is based on the number of young people in the population from the ONS (2020) mid year estimates and the prevalence across gender the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020).

Where known, the sexual identity of the majority of domestic abuse perpetrator identified through probation, was stated as 'heterosexual/straight', accounting for 79% (n=391) of perpetrators. Bristol and South Gloucestershire PDU have the highest number of LGBT offenders over the force area with 2% identifying as gay, lesbian or bisexual. However, 20% of cases did not have a recorded sexual orientation, so further work should be done to improve data collection and recording.

The majority of domestic abuse perpetrators in the probation cohort were, as discussed above, male, accounting for 97% of the total. In terms of age a significant proportion (44%) of perpetrators were aged between 25 and 34 years.

Disability

Overall, we can estimate there are around 91,740 individuals with a disability in Bristol. Of those individuals around 10,520 are likely to experience domestic abuse every year⁹⁹. A number of organisations do not consistently collect data on disability. There is no police recorded data around disability. Around 9.1 units of refuge space should be considered for this cohort. Although not all of those individuals will experience physical disabilities it could be beneficial to create these spaces with mobility and accessibility in mind.

Victims and survivors who have accessed the Home Choice housing register in Bristol have been more likely to be disabled than the general population. In Bristol we have estimated based on national prevalence data that around 23.5% of the population will have some form of disability. The Bristol housing register indicates that 54% of victims have some kind of disability. This is an important finding in terms of safe accommodation pathways as victims with a disability which affects their mobility will have very specific accommodation needs including adaptations or the need for ground floor accommodation without stairs, for example. It would be useful for the home choice and homelessness data to be broken down further in terms of disability so future needs assessments can estimate and explore how the disability may affect housing need. Based on the data available it may suggest that victims of domestic abuse are more likely to have a disability.

The data probation collect on perpetrators around disability is unknown in a high number of cases (58%). Of those where data has been collected through probation it indicates that almost half (42% n=210) of domestic abuse perpetrators have some kind of disability which is considerably higher than the general population.

Ethnicity

Almost a quarter of the population (23.5%) in Bristol are from Black, Asian & minoritised communities. This is a considerable difference from all other Local Authority areas across the region who all have less than 10% (range of 5% to 9.5%)

⁹⁹ This is based on the number of young people in the population from the ONS (2020) mid year estimates and the prevalence amongst disabled people in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020).

BAME populations. Using this figure alongside the estimated prevalence of domestic abuse we can estimate that around **3,450 victims of domestic abuse in Bristol will be from a Black, Asian & minoritised community**^{hh}. Based on this, using the COE estimates we can estimate that there will need to be around **1.8 units** available for Black, Asian & minoritised survivors.

This should therefore be a key consideration in terms of understanding the needs of the most common marginalised groups to ensure that services are accessible to them including additional resource for support such as language as well as ensuring through service specifications and contract monitoring, the services cultural competencies. In terms of safe accommodation support this is a particular area of interest as where Black, Asian & minoritised victim may need to move out of area, they will find it challenging to move to geographical neighbours if they require community connections as there are limited Black, Asian & minoritised communities across the wider force region. The most common Black, Asian & minoritised communities are Black (7%) and Asian (6%), so where services are designed, particularly in terms of languages for public awareness communications or campaigns, they should be in line with the local population demographic.

Ethnicity data has not been recorded for approximately 37% of domestic abuse victims reporting to the police in Bristol City in the past 3 years. Where known, and as defined by Avon and Somerset police force, the largest proportion of victims have been defined as 'White – North European'. The next largest group have been defined as 'Black', followed by 'Asian'.

Overall, 53% of victims/survivors were White or White British. Despite the volume of White or White British increasing, the proportion has actually decreased. In 2018/19 64% were White or White British. Black or Black British victims/survivors account for approximately 11% of all victims/survivors (however this had dropped to 8% in 2020/21). Asian or Asian British make up 6% and Mixed Dual Heritage 3%. Given the population in Bristol is only 23.5% Black, Asian & minoritized communities, the number of Black, Asian & minoritised victims presenting as homeless through the statutory service is double.

The ethnicity of the majority of known DA perpetrators was listed as 'White or White British', accounting for 78% of the total. Although this seemingly would suggest that Black, Asian & minoritised domestic abuse perpetrators are disproportionately represented through probation, we cannot directly compare to the local population figures as it includes both Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

^{hh} CSEW (2020)

Recommendations

- Domestic abuse commissioners should consider increasing capacity for dispersed accommodation, particularly for victims with a physical disability and male victims. These should be considered in terms of mobility access to ensure victims with a disability, including older people are able to access them.
- The local domestic abuse partnership should conduct an ethnicity audit across specialist domestic abuse services and housing options and advice to understand why Black, Asian & minoritised victims are presenting beyond estimated prevalence.
- The most prevalent Black, Asian & minoritised communities are Black and Asian. The local partnership should work with Local Authority analysts to understand this further in terms of languages spoken to ensure domestic abuse campaigns are shared in community spaces, and translated into the most common languages spoken.

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Davis and Associates Consultancy Limited is a small consultancy firm offering expertise in interpersonal violence with a particular specialism in domestic abuse and the wider forms of violence against women and girls.

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