

Executive summary - Domestic Violence and Abuse profile Bath and North East Somerset

Domestic violence and abuse is considered to be:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; emotional.

This definition is a useful starting point when investigating the problem of domestic violence and abuse in Bath and North East Somerset, as it specifically refers to that which occurs between those with an intimate or family relationship, a factor that makes domestic violence and abuse particularly concerning and difficult to address.

The definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so call 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

Overall rates and trends

- According to synthetic estimates based on the 2009 British Crime Survey, In Bath and North East Somerset 5,936 women and girls have been a victim of domestic violence and abuse in the past year
- The number of domestic violence and abuse related referrals to adult safeguarding has risen steadily over time from 46 in 2008/09 to 128 in 2011/12. However, this is in line with overall rates of reporting
- There have been 683 cases discussed at multi-agency risk assessments (MARAC) for high risk domestic violence and abuse cases since 2009, of which 23% have been repeats
- Rates of recorded domestic violence and abuse offences by the police have remained largely stable over time, with an average 70 crimes a month in 2012
- There were 1283 notifications of domestic violence incidents to Children's social care in 2011, up 18% from 2010, although recording has now been standardised and 252 children were affected by MARAC cases in 2012
- It is estimated that the annual physical and mental health care costs of domestic and sexual violence experienced by women in Bath and North East Somerset is over £3.7m of a total cost to society of £17.1m annually.

Profile of domestic violence and abuse

- Higher rates of police recorded domestic violence and abuse are recorded within urban wards and is strongly correlated with socio-economic inequality
- 9% of unemployed women are estimated to experience domestic violence and abuse, higher than the average rate
- There are concentrations of domestic violence and abuse crimes, calls and incidents during the weekend throughout the evening and night
- Half of domestic violence and abuse crimes are recorded as taking place on street
- Physical and emotional financial violence and abuse make up 83% of causes of adult safeguarding referrals and violence against the person is the most common recorded crime type.

Offenders

- 79% of domestic violence/abuse offenders recorded by the police were male, whilst 17% were female (remainder unknown and this has not changed over time)
- Offenders tend to be younger, with the under 30s experiencing the greatest concentration of offenders known to the police and probation service.

Victims

- The number of repeat victims at MARAC has remained reasonably consistent over time, with 24% of cases being repeats between 2009 and 2012
- 78% of adult safeguarding referrals 92% of MARAC cases and 77% of recorded crimes involved women as victims of domestic violence and abuse
- Estimates also suggest under-recording amongst male victims, these suggest up to 40% of domestic violence and abuse victims are male - the offence pattern is broadly similar across genders
- The age of victims are spread evenly between age ranges 16-45 for recorded crime, whilst half of the safeguarding were for people in the 64+ age range
- Although white victims represent a lower than expected proportion of police recorded crimes, the ethnicity for substantial proportion of cases had not been recorded
- Studies have demonstrated that survivors of violence and abuse would most like to receive support from doctors above any other professional.

Multiple needs

- Victims of domestic violence and abuse experience a wide range of mental health risk and are at least 3 times more likely to experience depression or anxiety disorders than other women
- There were 13 referrals into specialist programme or perpetrators with substance misuse issues between July 12 and Apr 13 and 19% (n=18) of offenders known to probation teams had risk linked to drug use
- 64% (n=61) of offenders known to probation teams had risk linked to alcohol use
- Estimates suggest women who suffer from ill-health and disability area almost twice as likely to experience domestic abuse as those who do not
- A substantial majority of referrals to adult safeguarding services had physical disabilities, this will be strongly related to the age profile of the victims and 19% of these referrals were investigated by local Mental Health providers.

Recording and understanding domestic violence and abuse

- Nationally, 15% of women suffering domestic violence and abuse had any reference to this fact in their NHS primary care record. Using national hospital admission codes, there were fewer than 10 hospital admissions for 2009-2011 in B&NES and no A&E admissions. However there were between 33.47 and 45.43 emergency hospital admissions for violence per 100,000 age standardised population
- No current data exists to gather domestic violence and abuse information from GPs, although studies of previous GP led projects to support victims have demonstrated up to £2,500 cost-effectiveness per year of quality adjusted life
- Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust has stated that it holds no information on domestic violence and abuse
- Developing Health Independence was in the process of changing IT systems at the time of the project and limited data was available.