

Definition of domestic abuse

The Northern Ireland Regional Steering Group on Domestic Violence has defined domestic abuse as ‘any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they are or have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation’, where:

- **Incident** means an incident anywhere and not confined to the home of one of the partners/family members;

- **Intimate partners** means there must have been a relationship with a degree of continuity and stability. The relationship must also have had (or reasonably supposed to have had) a sexual aspect, such as in the relationship between husband and wife or between others generally recognised as a couple including same sex couples; and

- **Family members** include mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents, whether directly or indirectly related, in-laws or stepfamily.

A crime will be recorded as domestic abuse where it meets the definition provided above. Not all domestic abuse incidents will result in the recording of a crime. Domestic abuse crimes are classified according to the Home Office Counting Rules and form a subset of the overall police recorded crime statistics.

An explanation of what constitutes an incident and a crime is provided in Section 2.1 of the [Crime User Guide](#).