



Police Service
of Northern Ireland



Trends in Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland

2004/05 to 2022/23

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We welcome comment and feedback on these statistics. If you would like to forward your views, receive notification of new publications or be kept informed of developments relating to PSNI statistics, please email your contact details using the email address provided on the cover page.

Things you need to know about this release

Coverage

This bulletin is an Official Statistics publication meaning it complies with the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#) as follows:

- Trustworthiness: the statistics are impartial, independent and released in an open and transparent manner in accordance with a pre-announced publication schedule
- Quality: the statistics are produced using robust and relevant data sources which undergo continuous quality improvement and assurance checks
- Value: the statistics strive to meet user needs informed by ongoing feedback, providing sufficient detail which is widely accessible.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) publishes figures on the levels and trends in police recorded domestic abuse incidents and crimes. As these figures only relate to those domestic abuse incidents reported to the police, they only provide an indication of the true extent of domestic abuse. The statistics are collated and produced by statisticians seconded to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). Collation of this data started in 2004/05.

This release presents statistics relating to domestic abuse incidents and crimes recorded by the police between 2004/05 and 2022/23. Supplementary data are available from the [domestic abuse motivations spreadsheet that accompanies this bulletin \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Domestic Abuse Definition

The PSNI has adopted the definition of domestic violence and abuse as outlined in the 2016 Northern Ireland Government Strategy 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland' as:

'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member'.

The following will assist in the application of this definition:

- (a) '**Incident**' means an incident anywhere and not confined to the home of one of the partners/family members;
- (b) '**Family members**' include mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents, whether directly or indirectly related, in-laws or stepfamily.
- (c) '**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.

What is a domestic abuse incident or domestic abuse crime as recorded by the police?

Police recorded crime data is a victim oriented approach to crime recording. A crime will be recorded as having a domestic abuse motivation where it meets the relevant definition provided above. Not all domestic abuse incidents will result in the recording of a crime, as what has occurred in the incident may not be of the level of severity that would result in a crime being recorded. Where crimes with a domestic abuse motivation are recorded, they are classified according to the Home Office Counting Rules and form a subset of the overall police recorded crime statistics. This means that the recording practices, methods of counting outcomes and allocation of crime types in respect of police recorded crime statistics apply equally to crimes with a domestic abuse motivation.

Further details of the background and recording practice in relation to police recorded crime statistics are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#). An explanation of what constitutes a crime is provided in Section 3.1 of this guide, while reference to domestic abuse incidents and crimes is available in Section 6.

Points to note in this bulletin

Incidents and Crimes: Domestic abuse crimes and domestic abuse incidents should not be added together as domestic abuse crimes are included in the domestic abuse incident count.

Gender unknown: Where reference is made to gender unknown, this may include persons who have not identified as either male or female.

Offences where a police officer becomes a crime victim whilst attending a domestic incident in the course of carrying out their duty are not included in the domestic abuse crime figures; however the incident that was attended by police will be recorded as domestic abuse incident.

Annual Revisions: Revisions to previously published data are applied on an annual basis to financial year crime figures from 2015/16 onwards, as a result of the introduction of the wider outcomes framework in April 2015. These revisions take account of crime cancellations and sanction outcomes identified since the previous annual publication. Revisions of this nature will next be applied in May 2024. Further guidance on crime cancellation can be found in the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime.

Harassment and Malicious Communications: the recording of malicious communications offences commenced for the first time in Northern Ireland from 1st April 2017 and are classified to Harassment which sits within Violence Against the Person. Also included within malicious communications offences are those relating to 'revenge porn'; new legislation on disclosing private sexual photographs and film with intent to cause distress was introduced in June 2016. A Home Office change introduced in April 2018 requires harassment to be recorded in addition to the most serious additional victim based offence. Both of these changes in recording practice should be considered in relation to any changes in levels recorded in the overall stalking and harassment classification.

Controlling or Coercive Behaviour: The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 created a new Domestic Abuse Offence which criminalises a course of abusive behaviour (including coercive and controlling behaviour, psychological abuse, emotional abuse, financial abuse and economic abuse). Recording of this offence started on 21st February 2022, and is included within the Stalking and Harassment classification. Further information on the Domestic Abuse Offence is available on the [Department of Justice website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Stalking: The Protection from Stalking Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 created offences to provide protection from stalking and threatening or abusive behaviour. Recording of these offences started on 26th April 2022 and is included within the Stalking and Harassment classification.

Conventions used in figures and tables

While the outcome rates are rounded to one decimal place, the outcome rate change in % pts is calculated on the unrounded outcome rates and then rounded to one decimal place.

'-' indicates that for offences recorded a percentage change is not reported because the base number of offences is less than 50, and that for offences detected an outcome rate cannot be calculated as there were no offences recorded.

'..' indicates that data are not available.

The charts in this release are not all shown to same scale.

Population Rates

The population estimates used within this bulletin are the latest mid-year estimates available at time of compilation and are available in Table 6.6 of the [domestic abuse motivations spreadsheet that accompanies this bulletin \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Mid-year population estimates are available from the [NISRA website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Key Points

Section 1 Overview

- There were 32,875 domestic abuse incidents recorded in 2022/23, the second highest level recorded since the data series began in 2004/05. This latest figure is more than one and a half times higher than the level of 20,959 recorded at the start of the data series in 2004/05.
- There were 22,343 domestic abuse crimes recorded in 2022/23 which is the highest level recorded since the series began in 2004/05. This figure is more than two and a quarter times higher than the level recorded in 2004/05 and represents one in five of all crimes recorded in this financial year.
- There were 17 domestic abuse incidents per 1,000 population¹ and 12 domestic abuse crimes per 1,000 population recorded by the police in 2022/23.
- Of the 32,875 incidents recorded in 2022/23 where there was a domestic abuse motivation, there were 15,485 which did not contain a crime (i.e. incidents where the circumstances did not amount to an offence being committed). The remaining 17,390 incidents contained one or more crimes (amounting to 22,343 recorded crimes in total). Just under half of incidents recorded in 2022/23 did not result in a crime being recorded.

Section 2 Trends by Crime Type

- The numbers of domestic abuse violence against the person offences, sexual offences, and theft offences (including burglary) recorded in 2022/23 were the highest to date.
- There were 8 domestic abuse homicides in 2022/23. All 8 offences were of murder, including one death which occurred in 2018 but was established as murder in 2022/23.
- Around a third of domestic abuse crimes also involved alcohol in 2022/23, compared with one in five of all crimes recorded by the police.

Section 3 Victims

- During 2022/23, 69 per cent of all domestic abuse crime victims were female and 31 per cent were male, compared with 74 per cent female and 25 per cent male in 2004/05.
- In 2004/05 three quarters of victims (75 per cent) were between the ages of 20 and 49, declining to 61 per cent in 2017/18 and 2018/19; the proportion in 2022/23 is 64 per cent. The proportion of victims under 15 rose to 14 per cent in 2016/17 and 2017/18; this has since fallen to 10 per cent in 2022/23, more than three times higher than the proportion at the start of the data series (3 per cent). The proportion of victims aged 50+ has generally increased since the start of the data series.
- Around nine in ten domestic abuse victims are of white ethnicity (87 per cent in 2022/23) and within this category the vast majority hold UK and Ireland nationality.

Section 4 Offenders

- Of all offenders dealt with by police in connection with domestic abuse crimes that result in a sanction outcome, more than four in five are male; in 2022/23 83 per cent were male and 14 per cent were female. Generally speaking, at least nine in ten offenders are aged 18 and over, and around four in five offenders are of White ethnicity and hold UK and Ireland nationality.
- The majority of relationships between the domestic abuse victim and offender are categorised as current or ex-spouse / partner / girlfriend / boyfriend etc. (around three in five since 2017/18). Up to a quarter are parent and child relationships.

Section 5 Outcomes

- The sanction outcome rate for domestic abuse crimes fell from a peak of 46.5% in 2010/11 to 26.3% in 2019/20; the sanction outcome rate in 2022/23 was 30.3%, the highest rate since 2015/16. This fall is mainly seen in relation to crimes dealt with by means of charge/summons. The charge/summons outcome rate for domestic abuse crimes was 42.7% in 2010/11 and 26.4% in 2022/23.
- Sanction outcome rates for all domestic abuse crimes were higher than those for all crimes recorded by the police until 2017/18. Since then the domestic abuse sanction outcome rates have been consistently lower.

¹ Crime per 1,000 population is calculated using the Northern Ireland mid-year population estimates published by NISRA, with the latest estimates available in table 6.6 of the spreadsheet accompanying this bulletin.

1. Overview of Trends in Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes

All tables referred to in the commentary of this section can be found in the [domestic abuse motivations spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Incidents and crimes with a domestic abuse motivation have been collated by PSNI in their current format since 2004/05.

There are a range of factors that can have an impact on the recorded crime data series, including those crimes with a domestic abuse motivation. For example changes to existing legislation, the introduction of new legislation and clarifications or changes to the Home Office Counting Rules can all cause discontinuities to the data series.

As far as possible these factors are identified in the points to note, commentary and table footnotes within this bulletin. Further information is also available in Appendix 1 of the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Domestic abuse incidents: Domestic abuse incidents have shown an overall increasing trend since 2004/05. While the number of domestic abuse incidents fell by 311 (-0.9 per cent) in 2022/23, this latest financial year is the second highest level in the data series and is more than one and a half times higher than the level recorded in 2004/05. [Table 1.1]

Population rates: The number of domestic abuse incidents per 1,000 population¹ ranges from 12 in 2004/05 to 17 in 2018/19, 2019/20, 2021/22 and 2022/23. [Table 1.1 and Table 6.4]

Domestic abuse crimes: Domestic abuse crimes have also shown an increasing trend since 2004/05. The latest figure of 22,343 is the highest since the data series began and is more than two and a quarter times higher than the level recorded in 2004/05. [Table 1.1]

Population rates: The number of domestic abuse crimes per 1,000 population¹ has ranged from 5 in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2010/11 to 12 in 2022/23. [Table 1.1 and Table 6.5]

Crimes with a domestic abuse motivation represented 20.0 per cent of all crimes recorded by the police in 2022/23, compared with 8.3 per cent in 2004/05. [Table 2.2]

Table 1.1 Domestic abuse motivations: incidents, crimes¹ and sanction outcomes², 2004/05 and latest ten financial years 2013/14 to 2022/23³

	Domestic Incidents Number ¹	Domestic Incidents Rate per 1,000 population	Domestic Crimes Number ¹	Domestic Crimes Rate per 1,000 population	Sanction Outcomes (numbers) ²	Sanction Outcomes (rates, %) ²
2004/05	20,959	12	9,647	6	-	-
...
2013/14	27,628	15	12,656	7	4,025	31.8
2014/15	28,288	15	13,357	7	4,186	31.3
2015/16	28,392	15	14,061	8	4,416	31.4
2016/17	29,166	16	13,930	7	4,054	29.1
2017/18	29,913	16	14,534	8	4,079	28.1
2018/19	31,682	17	16,166	9	4,333	26.8
2019/20	31,817	17	18,626	10	4,902	26.3
2020/21	31,196	16	19,024	10	5,424	28.5
2021/22	33,186	17	21,664	11	6,017	27.8
2022/23	32,875	17	22,343	12	6,777	30.3

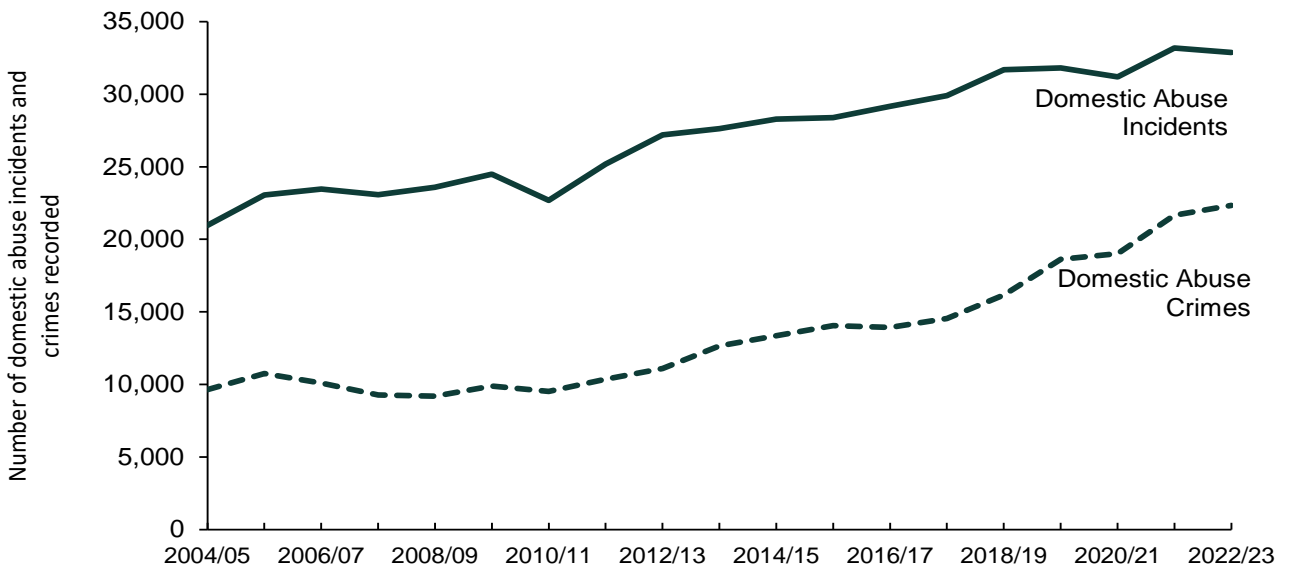
¹ Please note that crimes are included in the incident count and the two should not be added together.

² An explanation of the crime sanction outcomes data series can be found in section 3.5 of the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#).

³ The full time series is available in Tables 1.1, 6.4 and 6.5 in the [domestic abuse motivations spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#).

¹ Crime per 1,000 population is calculated using the Northern Ireland mid-year population estimates published by NISRA, with the latest estimates available in table 6.6 of the spreadsheet accompanying this bulletin.

Figure 1.1 Trends in domestic abuse incidents and crimes, 2004/05 to 2022/23



During 2022/23 there were 32,875 incidents recorded where there was a domestic abuse motivation. Of these, there were 15,485 which did not involve a crime (i.e. incidents where the circumstances did not amount to an offence being committed). The remaining 17,390 incidents contained one or more crimes (amounting to 22,343 domestic abuse crimes in total). Less than half of incidents recorded in 2022/23 resulted in no crime being recorded, the second year that the proportion has fallen below 50 per cent. Figure 1.3 shows the changing proportions over the latest ten financial years to 2022/23. [Table 1.1A]

Figure 1.2 Domestic Abuse incidents and crimes, 2022/23

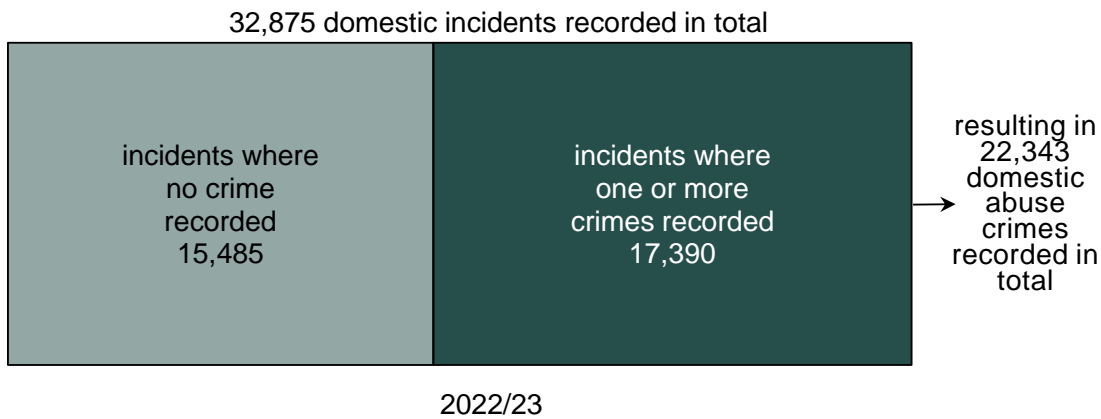
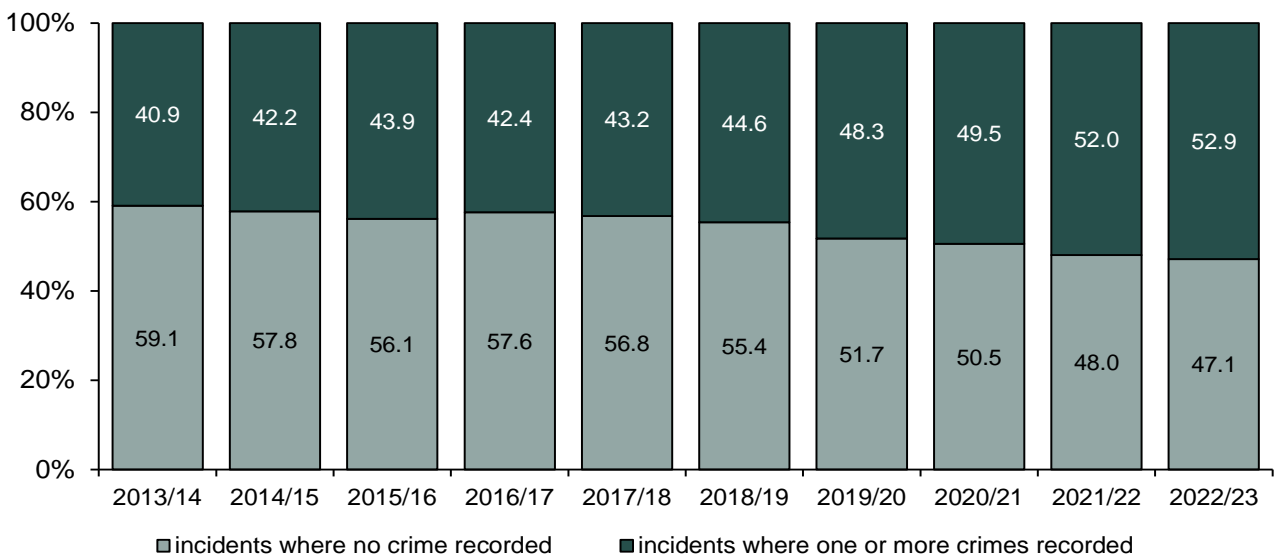


Figure 1.3 Domestic Abuse incidents with and without crimes recorded, latest ten financial years 2013/14 to 2022/23



2. Trends in Domestic Abuse Crimes by Crime Type

All tables referred to in the commentary of this section can be found in the [domestic abuse motivations spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#).

A description of each main crime type is provided in Appendix 1 of the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 below provide a picture for 2022/23 of how the main crime types are distributed within domestic abuse and also how they are represented with respect to all crimes recorded by the police. [Tables 2.1 and 2.2]

Trends within the main crime types are shown in figures 2.3 to 2.8. Violence against the person, sexual offences, and theft offences (including burglary) with a domestic abuse motivation recorded their highest levels in 2022/23. The highest level of robbery and criminal damage were recorded in 2021/22 and 2019/20 respectively. [Table 2.1]

Figure 2.1 Crimes with a domestic abuse motivation by crime type, 2022/23

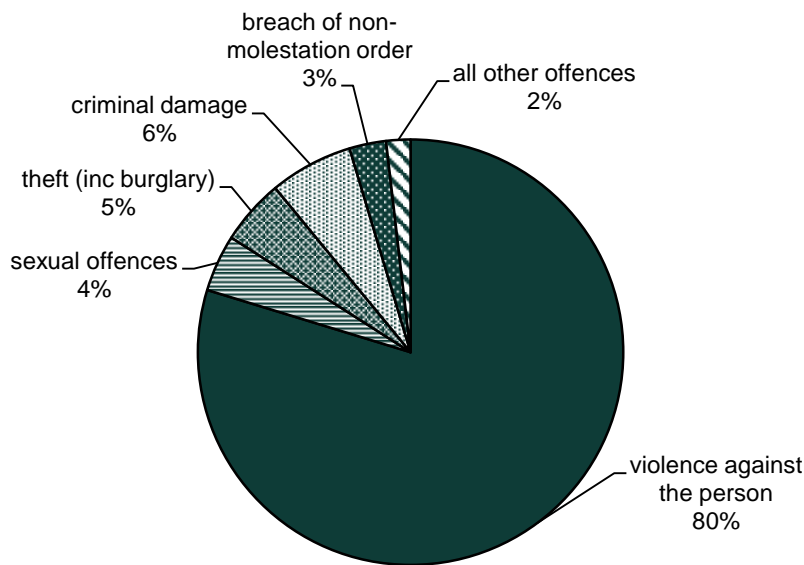
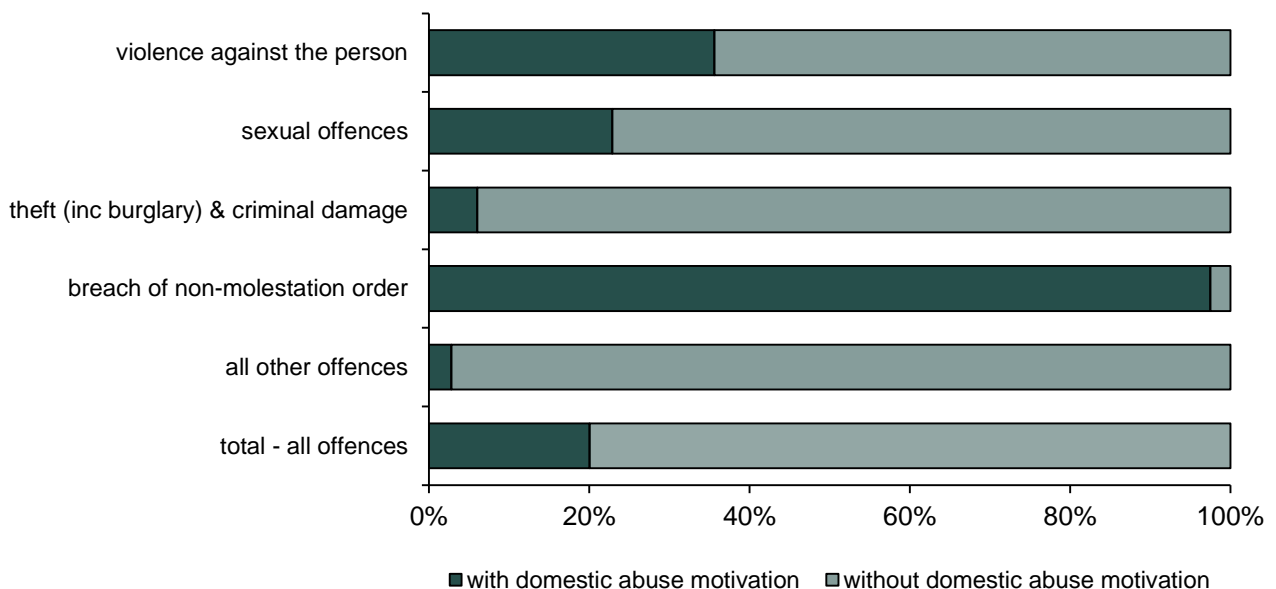


Figure 2.2 Crimes with a domestic abuse motivation as a percentage of all crimes recorded by the police, 2022/23



2.1 Violence against the person with a domestic abuse motivation

Violence against the person includes a wide range of offences from murder to minor assaults such as pushing and shoving that result in no physical harm. Even within the same classification the degree of violence used can vary considerably between incidents. Behavioural crimes such as stalking and harassment are also included.

This classification is further split into homicide, violence with injury (including death or serious injury – unlawful driving), violence without injury, and stalking and harassment.

Homicide: Homicide comprises the offences of murder, manslaughter, corporate manslaughter and infanticide.

Domestic abuse homicide: There were 8 homicides with a domestic abuse motivation recorded in 2022/23, one fewer than recorded in 2021/22. [Table 2.1]

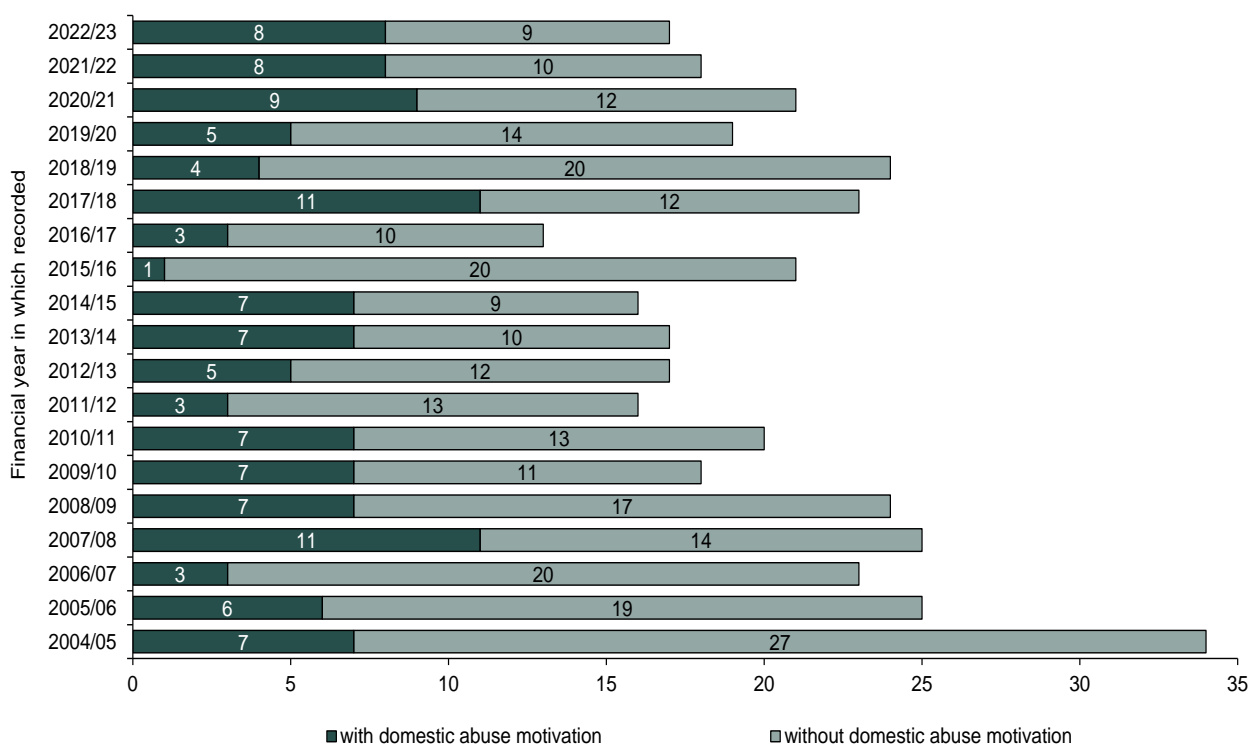
Since 2004/05 the lowest number of domestic abuse homicides was recorded in 2015/16 (1 recorded), with 11 recorded in both 2007/08 and 2017/18 (6 homicides in 2007/08 related to the same incident, while 4 homicides in 2017/18 related to the same incident).

All domestic abuse homicides since 2004/05 have been offences of murder, with the exception of the following domestic abuse manslaughter offences (8 in total), two of which were recorded in 2004/05, one in 2008/09, one in 2009/10, two in 2011/12, one in 2013/14 and one in 2021/22.

Further details on the age and gender of domestic abuse homicide victims and the relationship between the victim and the offender can be found in Section 3.3 of this report.

Domestic abuse murders: Figure 2.3 presents the total number of murders recorded in Northern Ireland in each financial year since 2004/05, showing the number of those murders with a domestic abuse motivation alongside the number of murders that did not involve domestic abuse.

Figure 2.3 Murders with and without a domestic abuse motivation, 2004/05 to 2022/23



Domestic abuse violence against the person: Figure 2.4 presents the trends in the main domestic abuse violence against the person classifications, with Figure 2.5 outlining the changes that have taken place within the stalking and harassment classification. [Table 2.1]

Domestic abuse violence with injury: The number of offences within this classification has increased since 2004/05 to reach the highest level recorded in 2022/23, nearly one and a half times higher than 2004/05. While these offences represented around half of all domestic abuse violence against the person between 2004/05 and 2011/12, the proportion has since fallen to just over a quarter in 2022/23.

Domestic abuse violence without injury: Offences have increased to their highest level in 2022/23, more than two and a half times higher than 2004/05. These offences represent between two in five and half of all domestic abuse violence against the person. While assaults without injury and offences relating to cruelty to children and young persons have shown increasing trends since 2004/05, offences of threats to kill have shown a declining trend within the last five years.

Domestic abuse stalking and harassment: Levels remained fairly consistent in the earlier part of the data series. Since 2017/18, the following changes have been made to the stalking and harassment classification through the implementation of new legislation and changes to recording practice introduced through Home Office guidance. Figure 2.5 presents these changes and the dates on which they were implemented:

- the recording of malicious communications started on 1st April 2017
- A Home Office change introduced in April 2018 requires harassment to be recorded in addition to the most serious additional victim based offence
- the recording of the domestic abuse offence started on 21st February 2022
- and the recording of the stalking offence started on 26th April 2022.

All of these changes in recording practice, along with increasing awareness of the application of these rules in the recording process, have contributed to the increased levels recorded in the overall stalking and harassment classification as shown in Figures 2.4 and 2.5. Between 2004/05 and 2022/23, the proportion of domestic abuse stalking and harassment has increased from 5 per cent of the domestic abuse violence against the person classification to 29 per cent.

Figure 2.4 Domestic abuse motivated violence against the person, 2004/05 to 2022/23

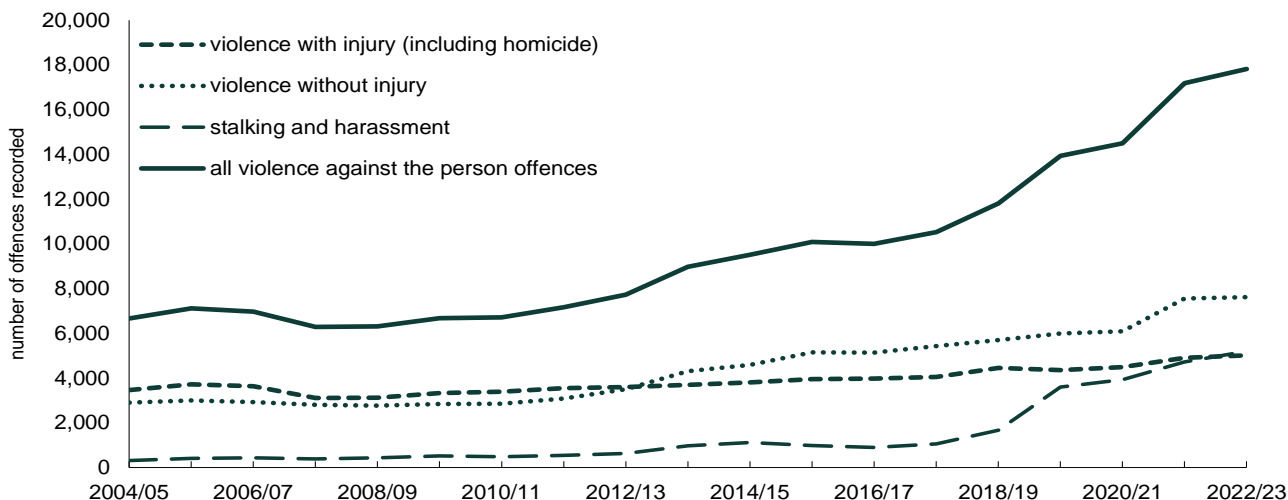
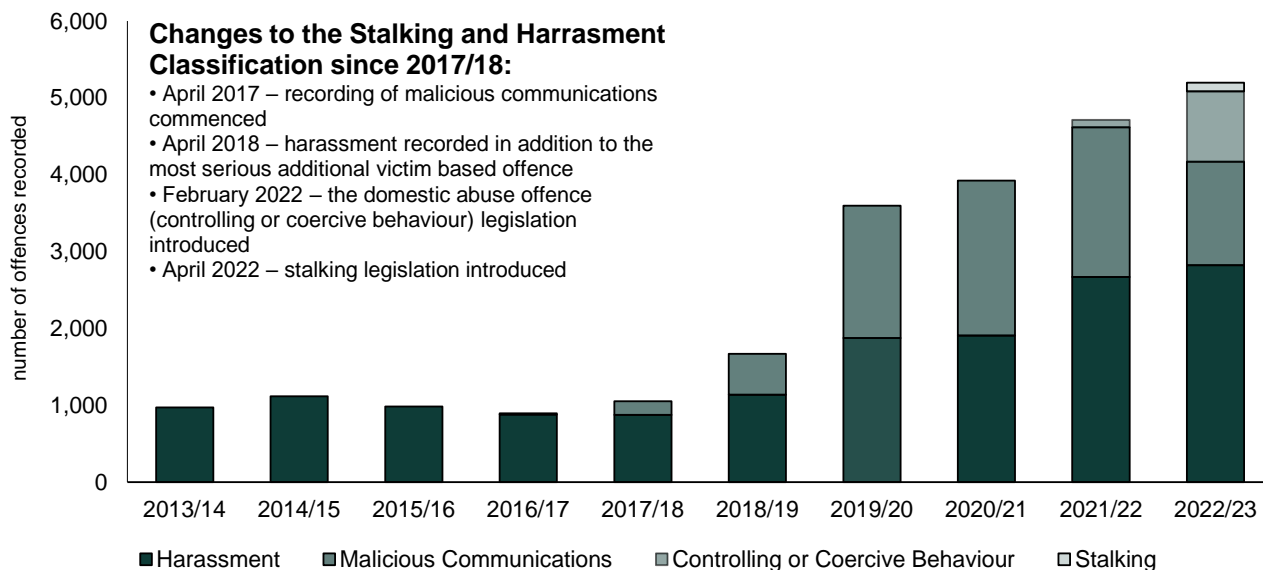


Figure 2.5 Domestic abuse motivated harassment, malicious communication, controlling or coercive behaviour and stalking, latest ten financial years 2013/14 to 2022/23



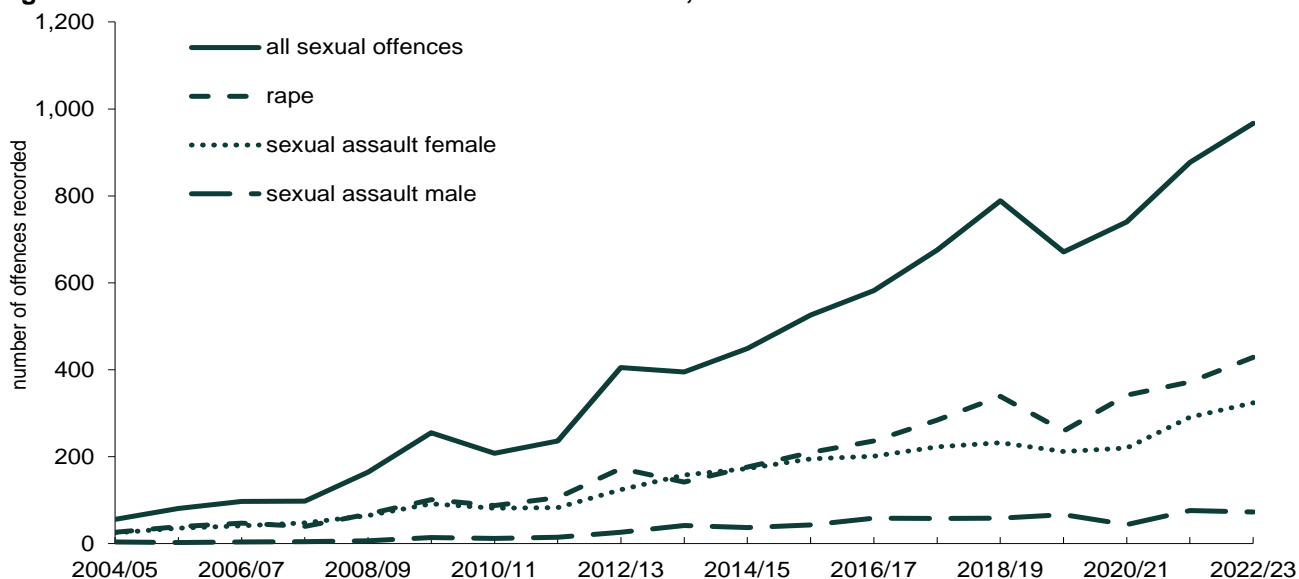
2.2 Sexual offences with a domestic abuse motivation

The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 was introduced in February 2009 and has altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences. While this has had an impact on the provision of comparable data series for sexual offences, the new legislation has brought the recording of sexual offences in Northern Ireland more into line with the legislation and recording of these offences in England and Wales.

Under the Home Office Counting Rules, offences which were reported to the police between February 2009 (implementation date of the new legislation) and March 2010 but which were committed prior to February 2009 were recorded under the previous legislation wherever possible. However in April 2010 this guidance was changed so that historic allegations committed under the previous legislation should be recorded and detected as if committed today. Interpretation of the sexual offence data series should be considered in the context of these changes.

The number of rape offences has increased since the start of the data series; the highest level (429) was recorded in 2022/23, with domestic abuse rapes representing a third of all rapes recorded by the police. Levels of sexual assault offences on males and females have also shown increasing trends, with the highest level for female victims seen in 2022/23 (324 offences) and the highest for male victims in 2021/22 (76 offences, 3 higher than 2022/23). [Tables 2.1 and 2.2]

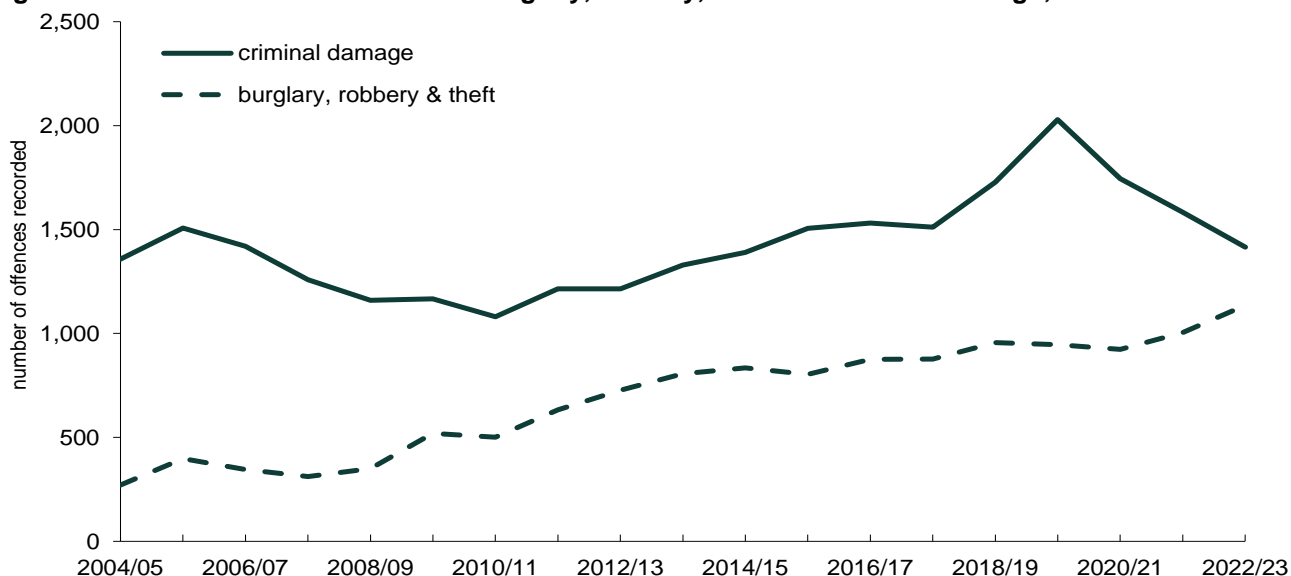
Figure 2.6 Domestic abuse motivated sexual offences, 2004/05 to 2022/23



2.3 Burglary, robbery, theft and criminal damage with a domestic abuse motivation

While these offences have tended to show increasing trends from 2010/11, criminal damage has fallen each year since 2019/20 and is now at a level previously seen in 2014/15. Criminal damage offences represent a decreasing proportion of all domestic abuse crime (6 per cent in 2022/23 compared with 14 per cent in 2004/05). Burglary, robbery and theft offences represent between 3 per cent and 7 per cent of all domestic abuse crime (5 per cent in 2022/23). [Table 2.1]

Figure 2.7 Domestic abuse motivated burglary, robbery, theft and criminal damage, 2004/05 to 2022/23



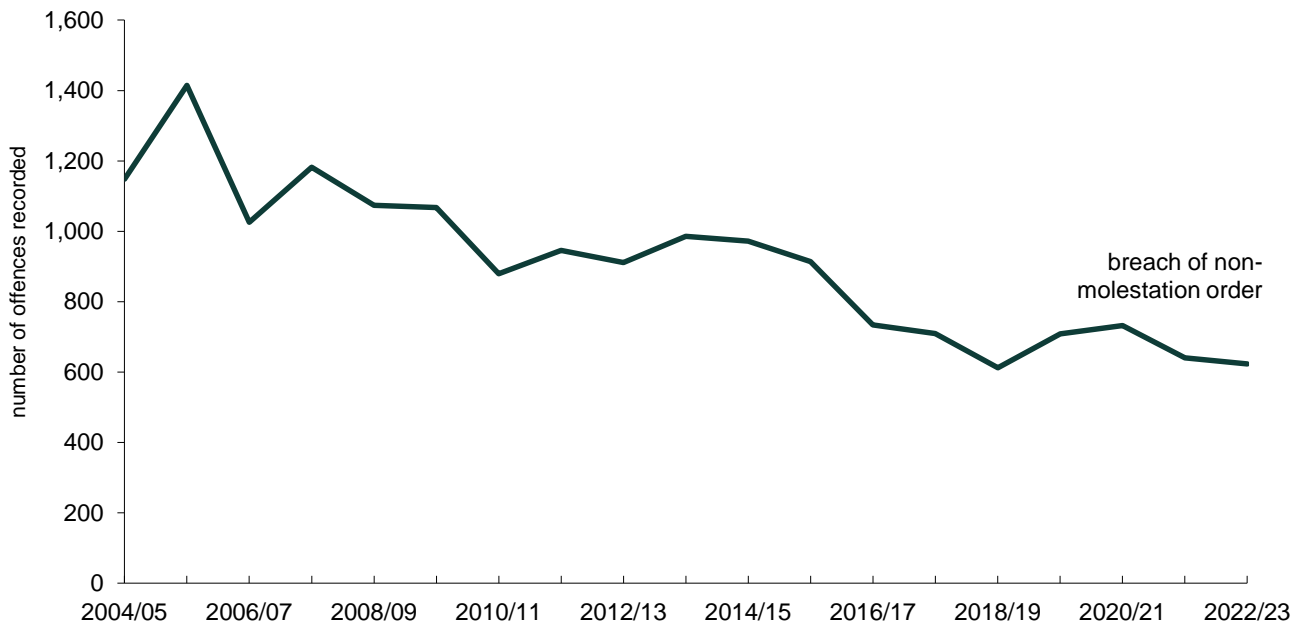
2.4 Other crimes against society with a domestic abuse motivation

Between 62 and 89 per cent of other crimes against society with a domestic abuse motivation are breaches of non-molestation orders, with this proportion generally declining from 2012/13. The remaining offences within this classification relate mostly to the offence of threat or possession with intent to commit criminal damage.

Breach of non-molestation order (domestic abuse motivation): The offence of breach of a non-molestation order was only introduced into the recorded crime data series in 2005/06. However the offence was in existence during 2004/05 and, during this financial year, those offences with a domestic abuse motivation were collated within PSNI.

Non-molestation orders are most commonly issued where the relationship between those involved would meet the domestic abuse definition. Generally speaking, at least 90 per cent of all breaches of non-molestation orders recorded by the police have a domestic abuse motivation. The number of breach of non-molestation orders has declined since the start of the data series from 1,415 recorded in 2005/06 to 612 recorded in 2018/19 (623 were recorded in 2022/23).

Figure 2.8 Domestic abuse motivated breach of non-molestation order, 2004/05 to 2022/23



2.5 Crime with a domestic abuse and alcohol motivation

Home Office Definition and guidance: Alcohol crime is identified through the use of a ‘flag’ on the crime recording system. Its aim is to provide the number of crimes directly attributable to alcohol to assist in assessing the impact of alcohol on crime and policing.

The alcohol flag should be applied where it is perceived by the victim or any other person that the effects of alcohol consumption on the offender or victim was an aggravating factor.

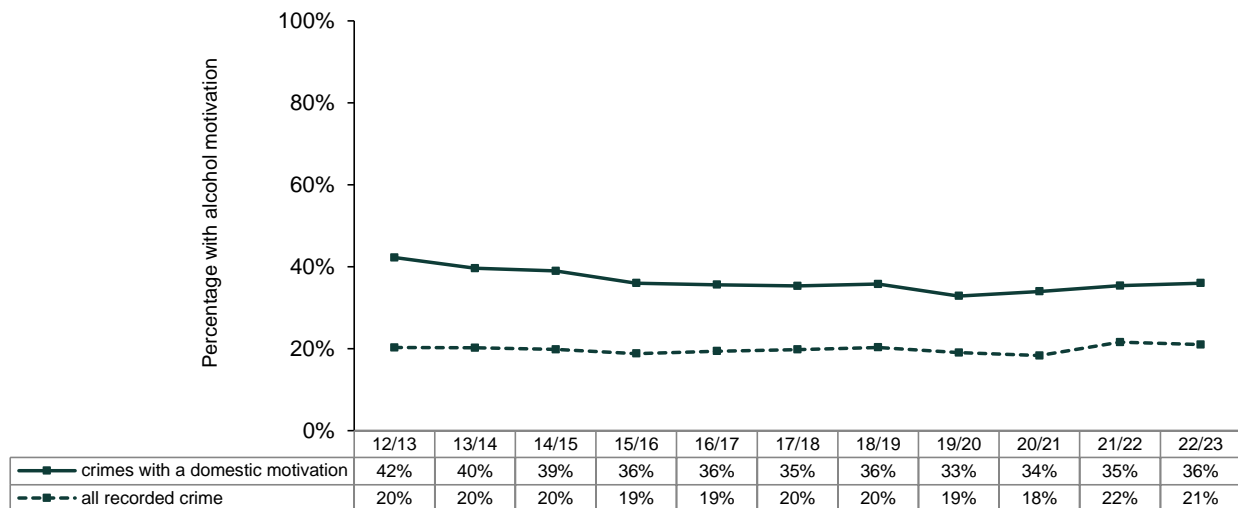
During 2012/13 a baseline was established for those crimes where alcohol was a contributory factor. This section outlines figures recorded since 2012/13 for crimes with a domestic abuse motivation. Figures for all crimes with an alcohol motivation are included for comparison and context.

Data quality: While crimes included within the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland are individually checked for compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules, the identification of an alcohol crime is derived from a motivation ‘tick box’ on the system used by PSNI to record crime. The motivation is identified and completed by a police officer or member of police staff for each such reported incident or crime. While the correct application of an alcohol motivation for all such incidents/crimes is not quality assured by the PSNI’s Statistics Branch, audits and data quality checks are routinely conducted in an attempt to ensure that any under or over-recording is corrected.

Alcohol involvement: Figures 2.9 to 2.13 present crimes with both a domestic abuse and an alcohol motivation. Details on all alcohol motivated crime have also been included for comparison and context. [Table 2.3].

Figure 2.9 examines crimes recorded between 2012/13 and 2022/23 which had an alcohol motivation applied, comparing those crimes with a domestic abuse motivation and all crimes recorded. The figures indicate that at least one third of crimes with a domestic abuse motivation also involved alcohol, while for all crimes with an alcohol motivation the percentage was around one in five. The percentage of domestic abuse crimes with alcohol involvement generally fell between 2012/13 and 2019/20, from 42.2 per cent to 32.9 per cent. Although the percentage has risen each year since then, 2022/23 (35.5 per cent) remains lower than the proportions seen between 2012/13 and 2014/15.

Figure 2.9 Percentage of crimes with alcohol involvement; those with domestic abuse motivation compared with all crimes recorded, 2012/13 to 2022/23



Alcohol involvement, violence against the person: The vast majority of crimes with an alcohol involvement are classified to violence against the person, around 80 per cent of crimes with a domestic abuse motivation and 70 per cent of all crimes recorded.

Figures 2.10 to 2.12 show that at least half of violence with injury offences, around two in five offences of violence without injury and up to one in five stalking and harassment offences involve both domestic abuse and alcohol. The proportions of domestic abuse violence with and without injury offences involving alcohol are very similar to all such crimes recorded, while for domestic abuse stalking and harassment the proportion is consistently higher than for all stalking and harassment offences recorded.

Alcohol involvement, all other crimes: around 20 per cent of crimes with a domestic abuse motivation and around 30 per cent of all crimes recorded fall within classifications other than violence against the person.

Figure 2.13 shows that, in relation to alcohol involvement, the proportion of all other crimes with a domestic abuse motivation is higher than for all other crimes recorded (more than a quarter compared with around one in ten).

Figure 2.10 Percentage of violence with injury offences where alcohol is involved, 2012/13 to 2022/23

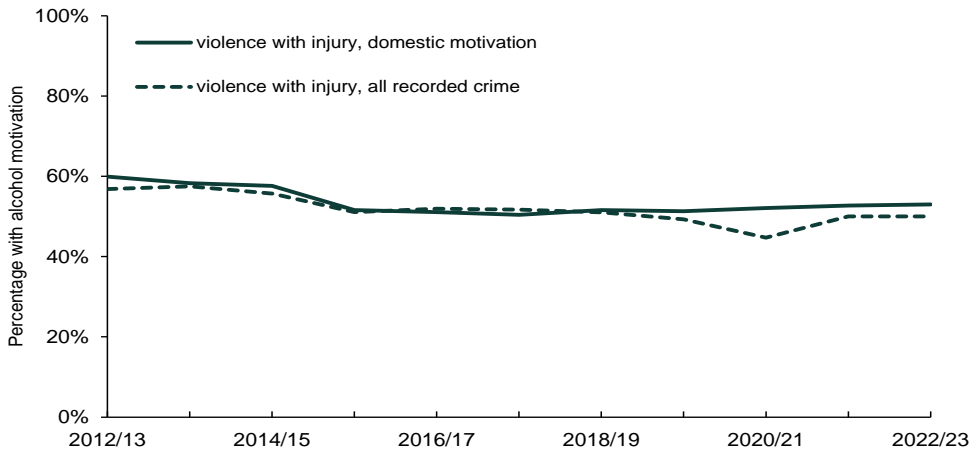


Figure 2.11 Percentage of violence without injury offences where alcohol is involved, 2012/13 to 2022/23

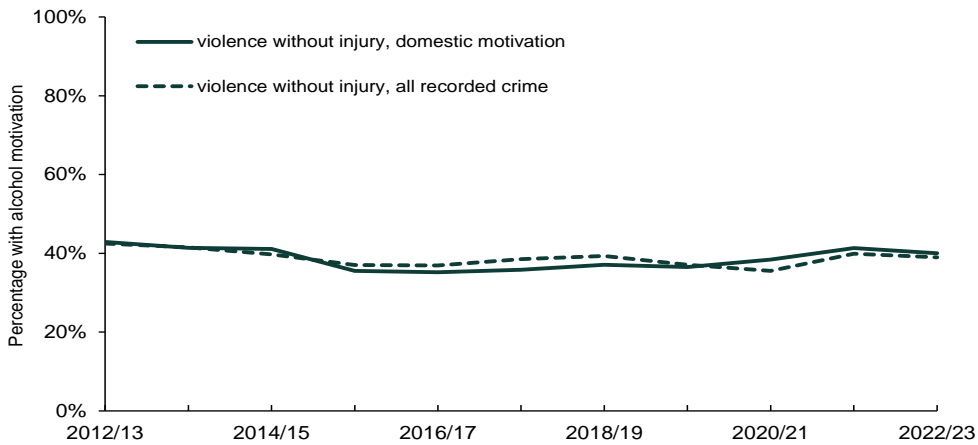


Figure 2.12 Percentage of stalking & harassment offences where alcohol is involved, 2012/13 to 2022/23

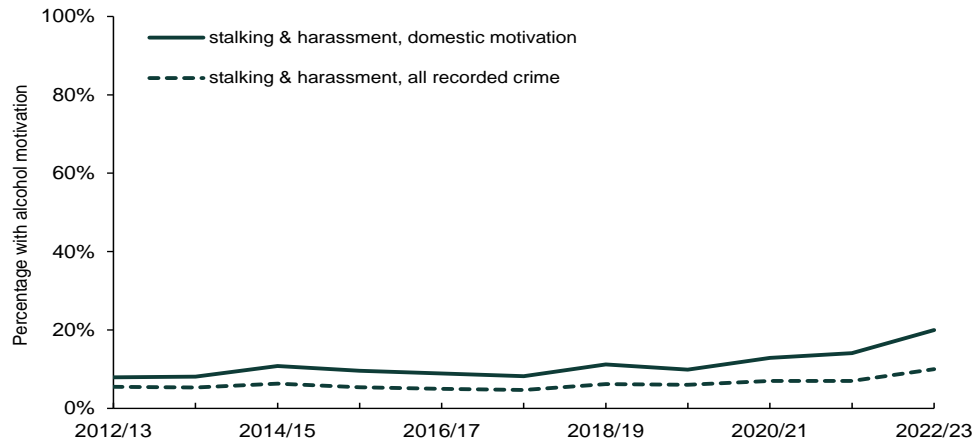
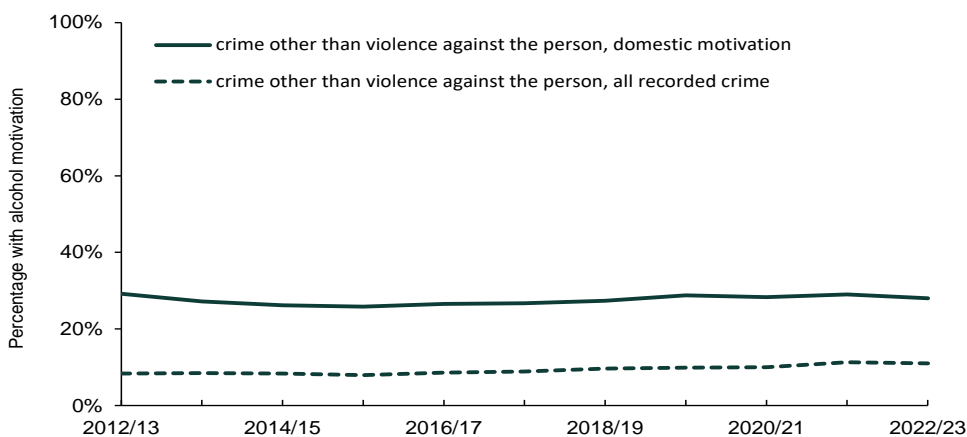


Figure 2.13 Proportion of all other crime classifications where alcohol is involved, 2012/13 to 2022/23



3. Victims of Domestic Abuse Crime

A person can be the victim of more than one crime on more than one occasion during each time period presented. The figures in this section therefore relate to the victim characteristics of each crime recorded rather than to the number of discrete victims.

Please note: figures on victim characteristics provided in this bulletin may differ slightly from those previously published. These details are extracted from a live operational system and, where possible, are updated to improve the level of coverage available.

All tables referred to in the commentary of this section can be found in the [domestic abuse motivations spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#).

3.1 Victim Characteristics

Age and gender profile: Figures 3.1 to 3.4 demonstrate the changing profile of the age and gender of domestic abuse crime victims and also how these age and gender profiles compare to that of the Northern Ireland population, based on the [mid-year population estimates \(opens in a new window\)](#) for 2004 (1,714,042) and 2022 (1,910,543). [Tables 3.2 and 3.3].

Figure 3.1 Age profile of victims of domestic abuse crimes compared with Northern Ireland population profile, 2004/05

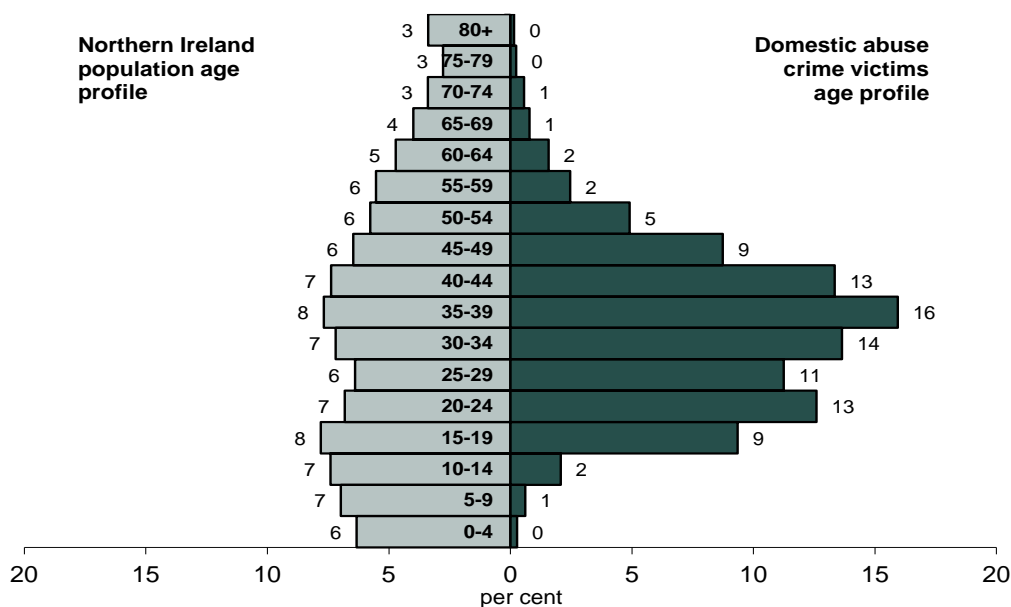
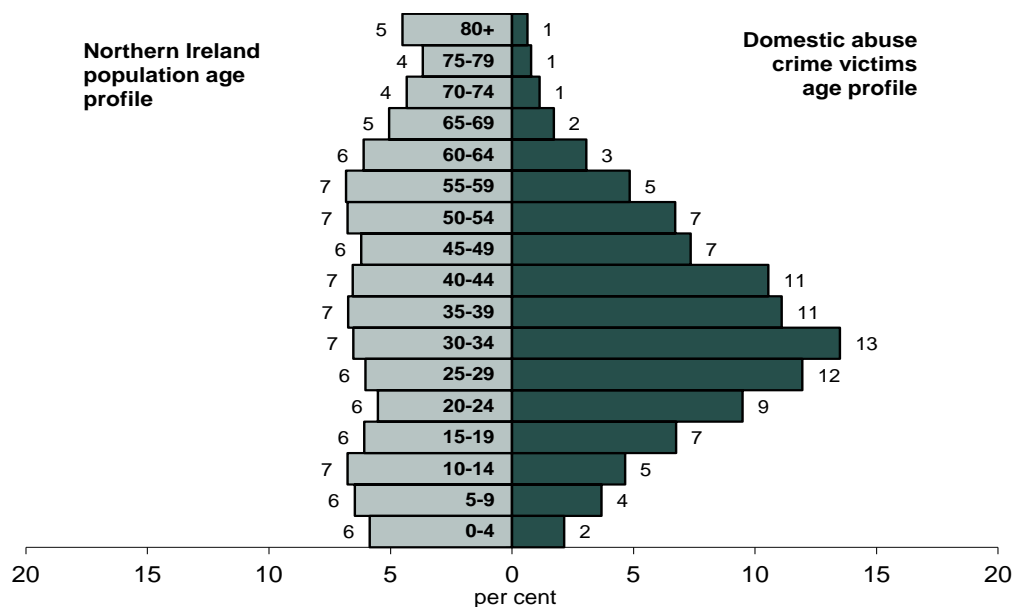


Figure 3.2 Age profile of victims of domestic abuse crimes compared with Northern Ireland population profile, 2022/23



Victim gender: In 2004/05 males represented a quarter of all domestic abuse victims, increasing to 32 per cent in 2017/18; the proportion in 2022/23 is 31 per cent. [Figures 3.3 and 3.4, Table 3.3]

Figure 3.3 Gender profile of victims of domestic abuse crimes compared with Northern Ireland population profile, 2004/05

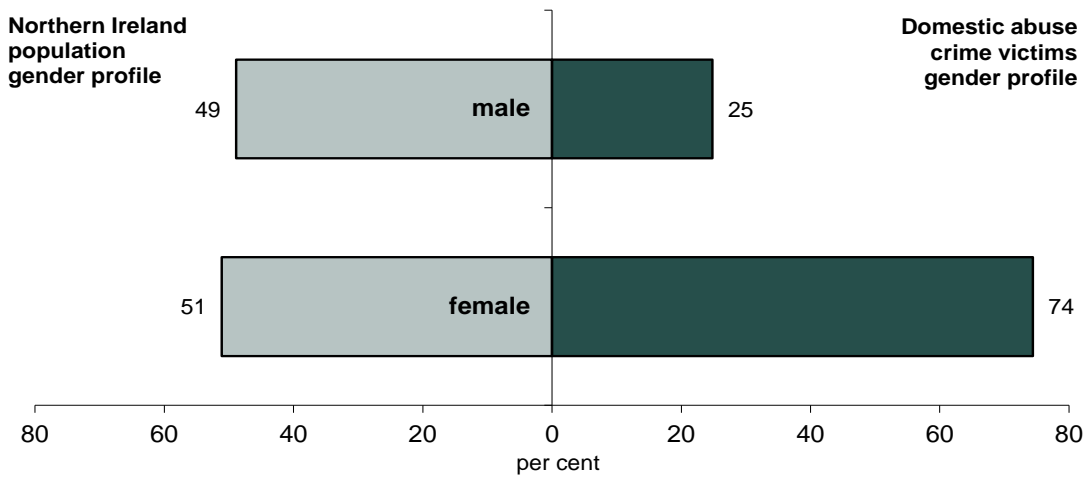
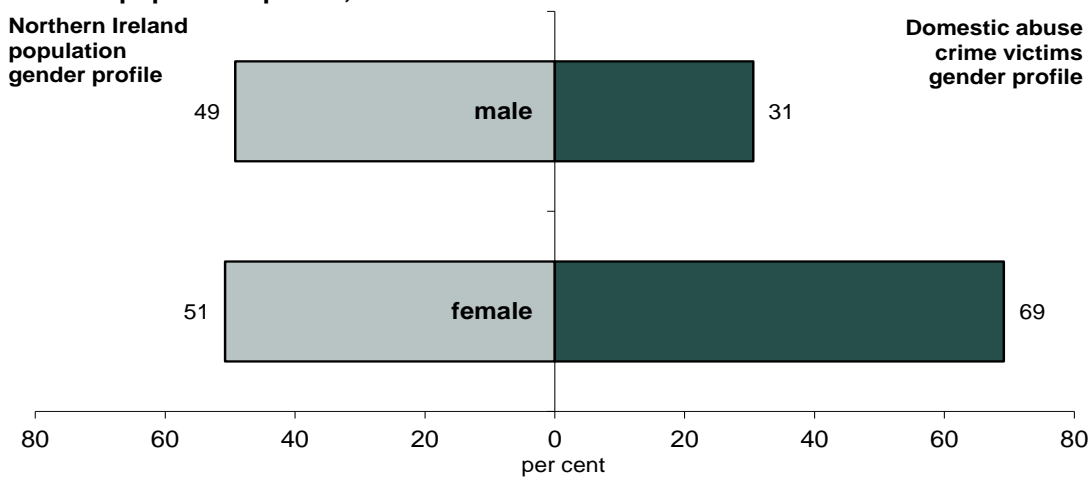


Figure 3.4 Gender profile of victims of domestic abuse crimes compared with Northern Ireland population profile, 2022/23

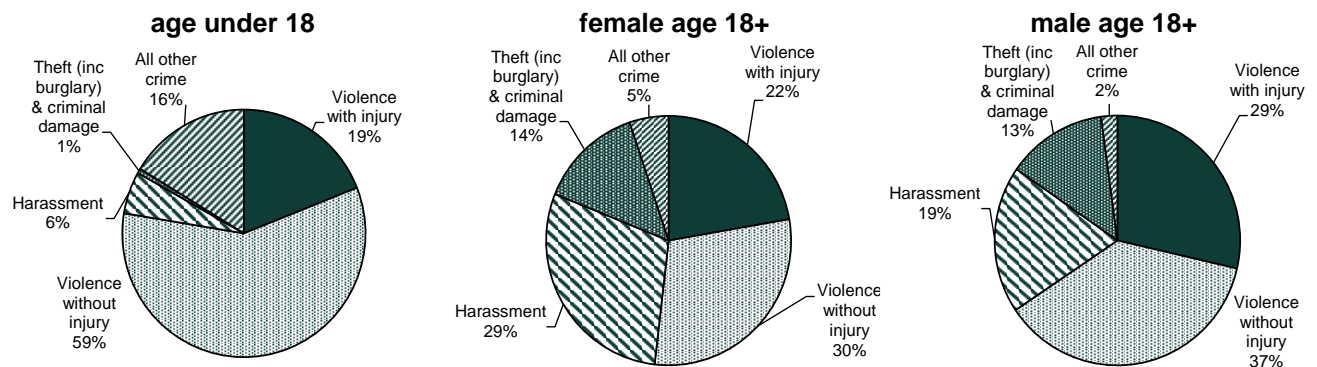


Victim ethnicity and nationality: Around nine in ten victims are of white ethnicity (87 per cent in 2022/23) and up to two per cent of victims are classified to Asian, Black or Mixed/Other ethnicity. At least three quarters of victims are of white ethnicity with UK and Ireland nationality (77 per cent in 2022/23). Between 2007/08 and 2020/21 ethnicity details are not available for 4 per cent to 8 per cent of records, rising to 10 per cent and 11 per cent of records in 2021/22 and 2022/23 respectively. [Table 3.8]

3.2 Victim characteristics by crime classification

The Home Office has identified offences as being ‘victim-based’, ‘state-based’ or ‘victim and state-based’. State-based offences are those for which no member of the public or business/organisation is a victim. The majority of state-based offences with a domestic abuse motivation relate to breach of non-molestation orders (see section 2.4 for further details).

Figure 3.5 Victims of domestic abuse by age and gender: percentage in each main crime type 2022/23



Domestic Abuse Crime rates 2022/23 (proportions in figure 3.5)

Victim aged under 18: There were 7 victims of domestic abuse crimes under the age of 18 per 1,000 of the population under 18; 4 per 1,000 were victims of violence without injury offences.

Female victims aged 18+: There were 17 female victims of domestic abuse crimes aged 18+ per 1,000 of the female population aged 18+; 4 per 1,000 were victims of violence with injury, and 5 per 1,000 were victims in each of violence without injury and stalking and harassment.

Male victims aged 18+: There were 7 male victims of domestic abuse crimes aged 18+ per 1,000 of the male population aged 18+; 2 per 1,000 were victims of violence with injury, 3 per 1,000 were victims of violence without injury and 1 per 1,000 were victims of stalking and harassment.

3.3 Domestic abuse homicides, victim characteristics

Figure 3.6 shows the number of homicides since 2007/08 with a domestic abuse motivation and the relationship between the victim and the offender. Figure 3.7 gives a breakdown of domestic abuse homicides by victim age and gender. [Tables 3.9A and 3.9B]

As indicated in Section 2.1 of this report, 6 homicides in 2007/08 related to the same incident, while 4 homicides in 2017/18 related to the same incident.

Four female victims of homicide (age 18+) involving partner/ex-partner were established as homicide in a more recent year to the one in which the death occurred; three of these were established as homicide during 2013/14 and one during 2014/15. One male victim of homicide (age <18) involving other family relationship was established as homicide during 2022/23 but the death occurred in a previous year.

Figure 3.6 Domestic abuse homicides and victim relationship to offender, 2007/08 to 2022/23

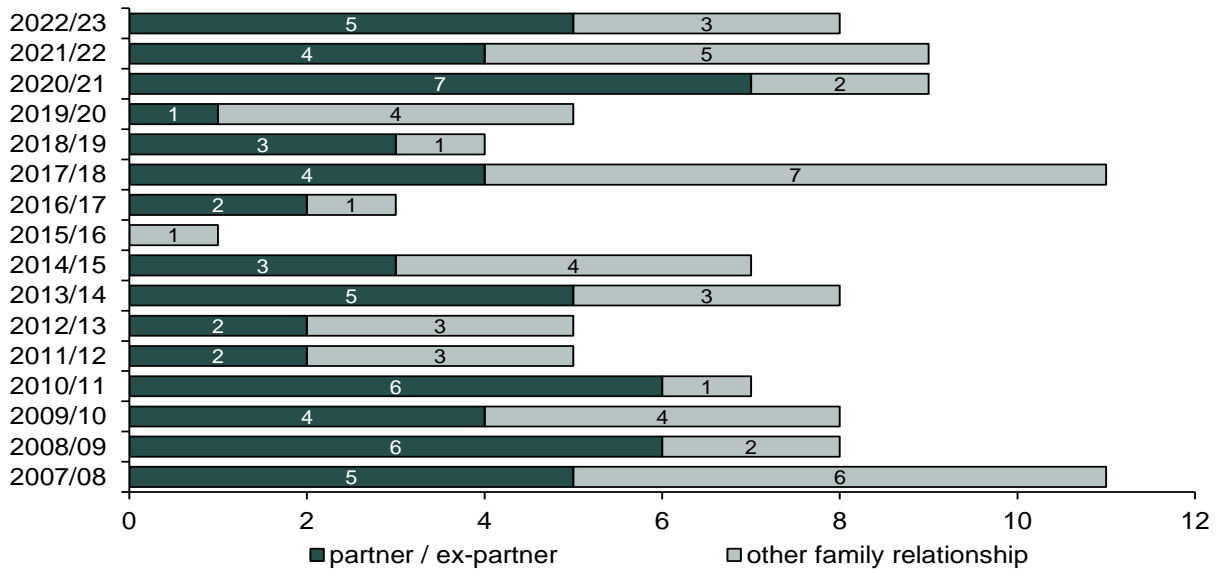
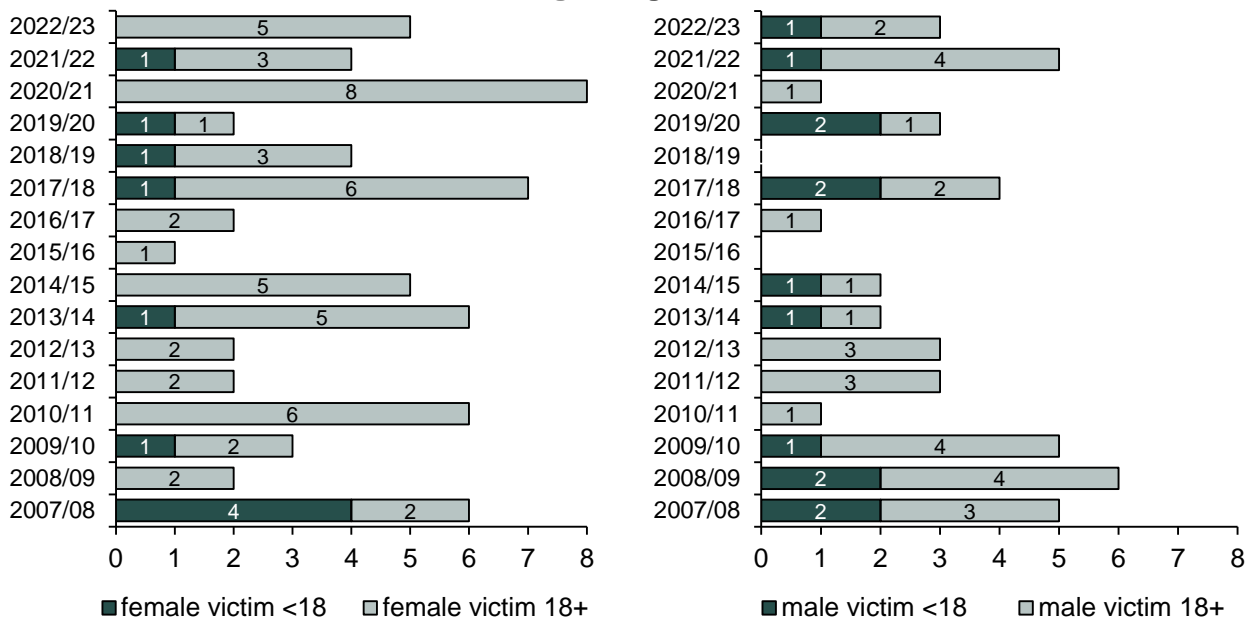


Figure 3.7 Domestic abuse homicides victim age and gender, 2007/08 to 2022/23



4. Offender Characteristics for Domestic Abuse Motivated Crimes, 2010/11 to 2022/23

This offender characteristics data has been compiled from 2010/11 onwards and has the following limitations.

For the purposes of this section an offender is defined as someone who has been dealt with by police by means of one of the following outcomes: charge, summons, caution, discretionary disposal, penalty notice for disorder, and having the offence taken into consideration at court. As such, this does not cover all persons coming into contact with police on the basis of potential involvement in domestic abuse.

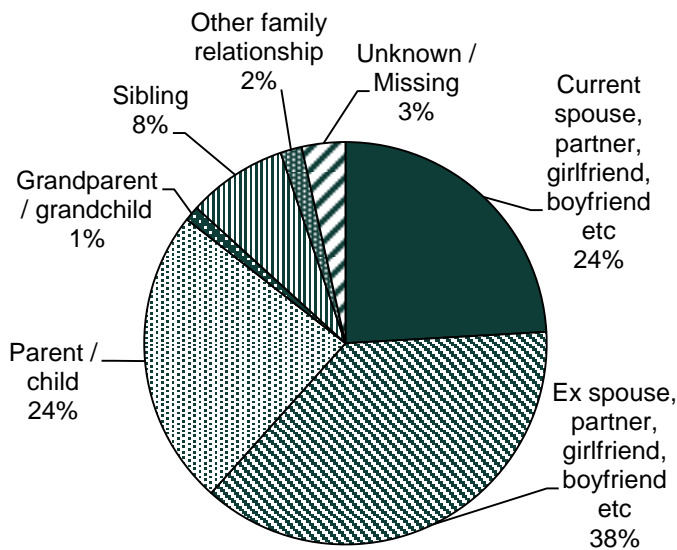
A person may have been an offender in relation to more than one offence on more than one occasion during the time period. These figures therefore relate to the offender characteristics of each offence detected rather than number of discrete offenders. It is also important to note that more than one offender can be detected for the same offence.

A full breakdown of offender characteristics by age, gender, ethnicity/nationality and relationship to the victim is available in Tables 4.2 to 4.5 of the [domestic abuse motivations spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Offender age, gender and ethnicity: More than four in five offenders are male; in 2022/23 83 per cent were male and 14 per cent were female. Up to five per cent of offenders are under 18 and just over nine in ten are aged eighteen or over. During 2022/23, age or gender was missing or unknown in around three per cent of cases. Around four in five offenders are of White ethnicity with UK & Ireland nationality.

Victim and offender relationship: Between 2010/11 and 2022/23 the proportion of parent and child relationships and relationships involving ex-spouse, partner, girlfriend, boyfriend etc. have increased. These increases should be seen in the context of a fall in proportion where the relationship details are missing or unknown (29 per cent in 2011/12 and 3 per cent in 2022/23).

Figure 4.1 Nature of relationship between victim and offender, 2022/23



5. Sanction Outcomes for Crimes with a Domestic Abuse Motivation

An explanation of the sanction outcomes and sanction outcome rates presented in this section can be found in Section 3.5 of the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#).

All tables referred to in the commentary of this section can be found in the [domestic abuse motivations spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#). For those charts presenting part of the time series, the complete time series is available in this spreadsheet.

Comparison of sanction outcome rates for domestic abuse crimes and all crimes recorded by the police:

Figure 5.1 presents the domestic abuse and overall crime sanction outcome rates since 2007/08. Sanction outcome rates for all domestic abuse crimes were higher than those for all crimes recorded by the police until 2017/18. Since then the domestic abuse sanction outcome rates have been consistently lower.

The domestic abuse sanction outcome rates for theft and criminal damage offences remain higher than those for all such offences recorded by the police. Between 2011/12 and 2020/21 the domestic abuse sanction outcome rate for violence against the person offences was lower than the sanction outcome rate for all violence against the person offences recorded; in 2021/22 and 2022/23 the two sanction outcome rates are the same. The domestic abuse sanction outcome rates for sexual offences has been lower than that for all sexual offences for the majority of the period since 2007/08. Other offences with a domestic abuse motivation have had consistently lower sanction outcome rates than those for all other offences recorded since 2011/12.

Figure 5.1 Sanction outcome rates for domestic abuse compared with overall crime, 2007/08 to 2022/23

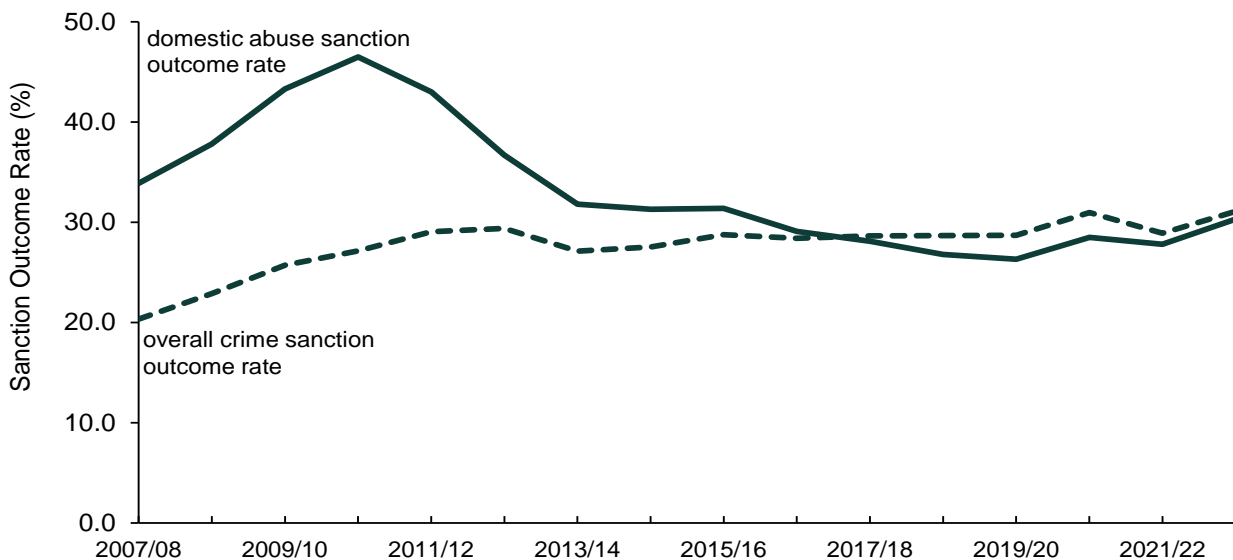


Figure 5.2 Sanction outcome rates by crime type, domestic abuse crime and all crimes recorded by the police, 2022/23

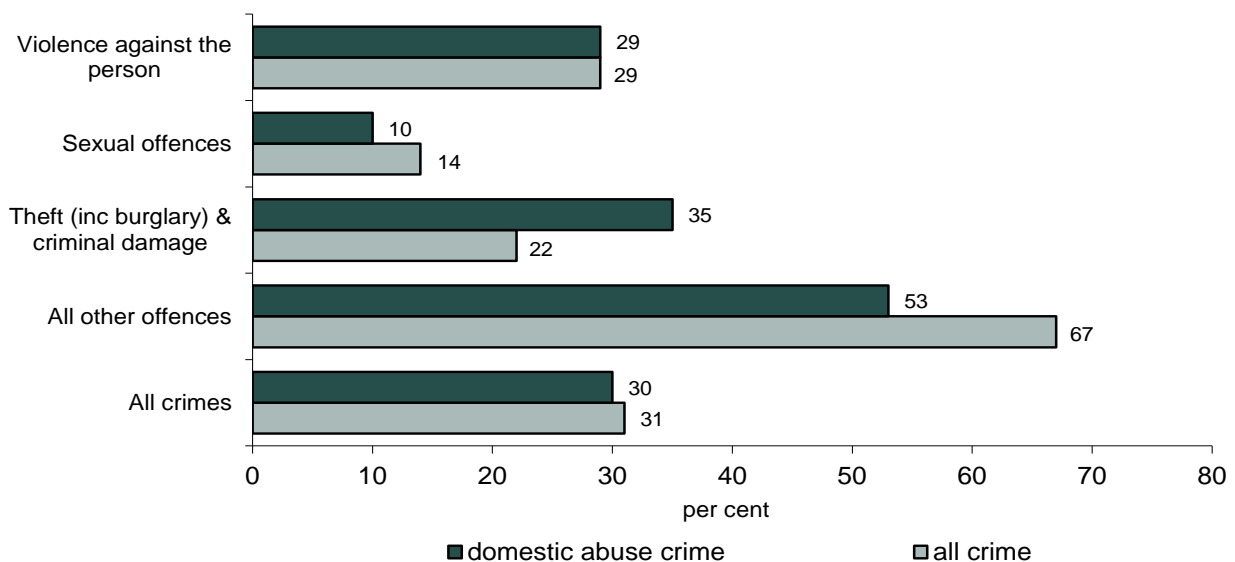
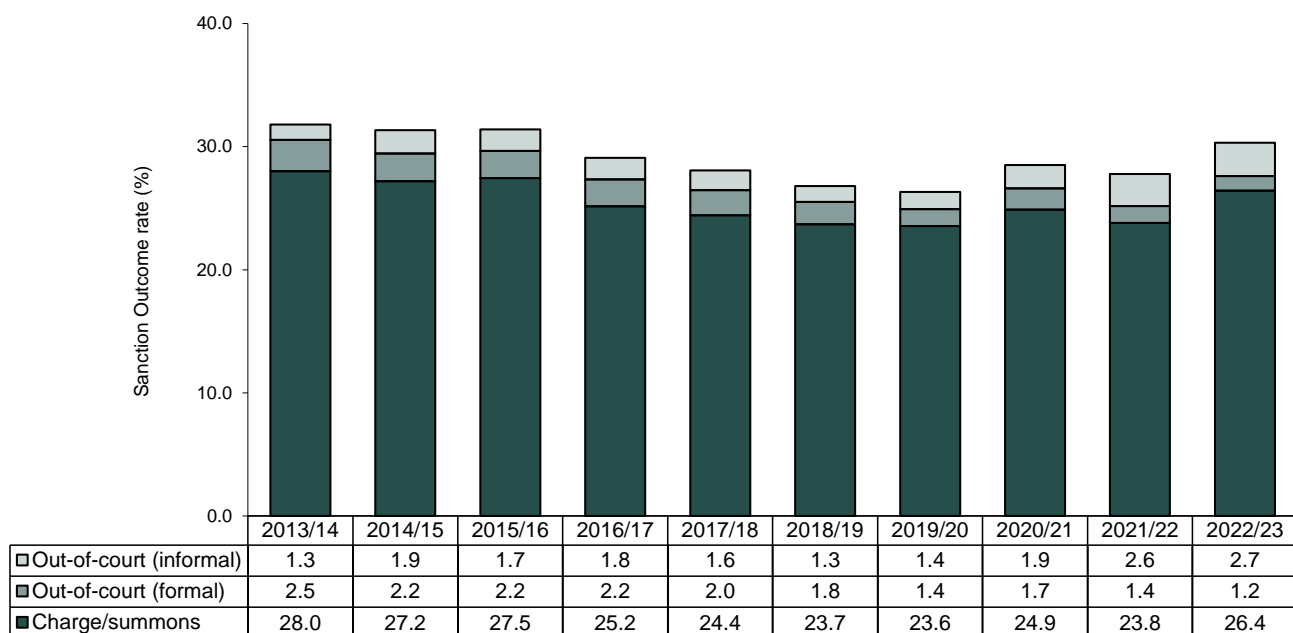


Figure 5.3 shows the trend in the sanction outcome rate for domestic abuse crimes over the latest ten financial years 2013/14 to 2022/23, along with the split by the method of disposal. Nearly nine in ten domestic abuse sanction outcomes are charge/summons. This compares with charge/summons accounting for up to eight in ten sanction outcomes for all crimes recorded by the police.

Figure 5.3 Sanction Outcome rates for domestic abuse crimes by method of disposal, latest ten financial years 2013/14 to 2022/23



A full break down of all outcomes (including non-sanction outcomes) for domestic abuse crimes from 2015/16 is available in Section 4 of the publication [Outcomes of Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2015/16 to 2022/23 \(opens in a new window\)](#). This includes outcomes which did not result in a sanction, for example those where there were evidential difficulties and those where the investigation was completed with no suspect identified.

Figures 5.4 to 5.6 show the trends in crimes, sanction outcomes and sanction outcome rates for the following crime groupings: violence against the person & sexual offences, burglary, robbery, theft & criminal damage and other crimes against society (the majority of these offences are breach of non-molestation orders). These charts are not shown to the same scale. However they demonstrate how changing volumes of crimes and sanction outcomes can have an impact on the sanction outcome rate. [Tables 2.1, 5.2 (numbers) and 5.2 (rates)]

These charts also demonstrate the difference in sanction outcome rates across these groupings. A potential offender can be more easily identified in relation to a domestic abuse crime than for crime in general. However due to the nature of domestic abuse crimes, a victim may not wish to support prosecution of the offender.

Figure 5.4 Violence against the person & sexual offences; domestic abuse crimes recorded, outcomes and outcome rates, latest ten financial years 2013/14 to 2022/23

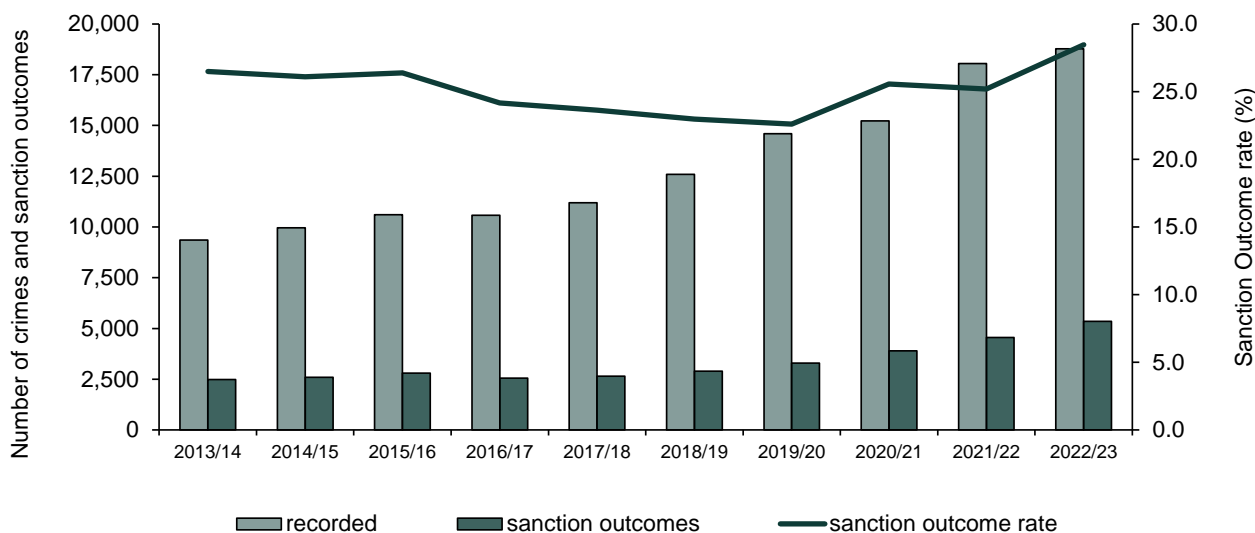


Figure 5.5 Burglary, robbery, theft & criminal damage; domestic abuse crimes recorded, sanction outcomes and sanction outcome rates, latest ten financial years 2013/14 to 2022/23

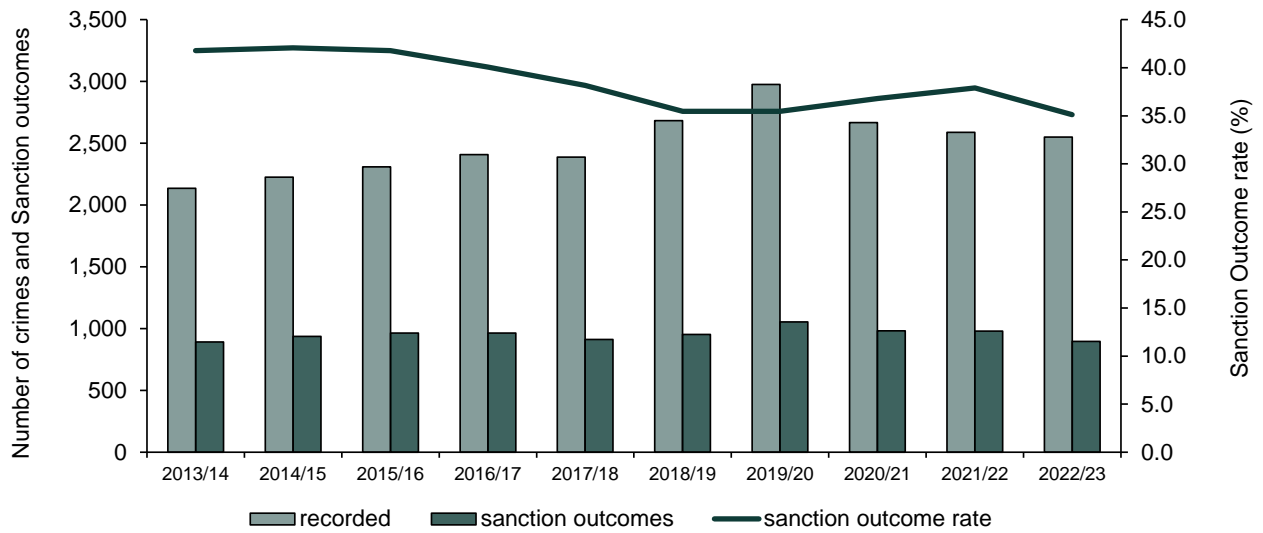
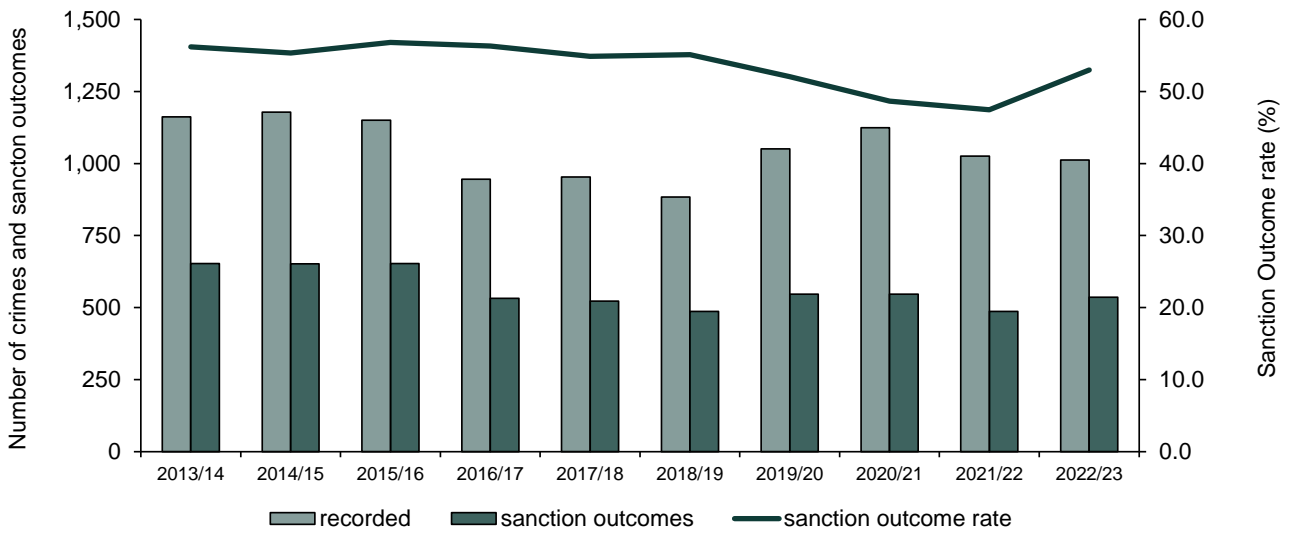


Figure 5.6 Other crimes against society; domestic abuse crimes recorded, sanction outcomes and sanction outcome rates, latest ten financial years 2013/14 to 2022/23



6. Geographic patterns of incidents and crimes with a domestic abuse motivation

As a general rule crimes are recorded geographically by the police based on the location in which the incident occurred.

As part of the Review of Public Administration which came into effect on 1st April 2015, PSNI moved from eight to eleven policing districts, with the new policing model becoming fully operational at the end of September 2015. For domestic abuse crimes the geographic information required to allocate the breach of non-molestation order offences for 2004/05 to the new policing structure was not available, while the level of geographic information required to allocate domestic abuse motivated incident records to the new boundaries was insufficient for the financial years 2004/05 to 2006/07. For these reasons, comparison of domestic abuse motivated crimes at policing district level is only available for the financial years dating back to 2005/06 and back to 2007/08 for domestic abuse motivated incidents.

Belfast City, whilst being only one policing district, accounts for a reasonable proportion of all domestic abuse motivated incidents/crimes recorded in Northern Ireland. It includes four local policing teams based in Strandtown (East), Tennent Street (North), Lisburn Road (South), and Woodbourne (West). Figures for each of these local policing teams are made available to assist with district level comparisons.

6.1 Domestic abuse motivations by policing district

Detailed tables are available in covering incidents, recorded crime, sanction outcome rates and population rates for incidents and crimes.

Pivot tables are also available in [domestic abuse motivations spreadsheet \(opens in a new window\)](#), providing a breakdown of crime type for each of recorded crime, sanction outcomes (numbers and rates) and population rates. They also provide a monthly breakdown by policing district for both incidents and crimes.

6.2 Additional geographic breakdowns of domestic abuse motivated incidents and crimes

The [NISRA Data Portal \(opens in a new window\)](#) website is updated annually in relation to incidents and crimes with a domestic abuse motivation. The available geographies are listed below:

Incidents with a domestic motivation

Ward 2014, District Electoral Area (DEA) 2014 and Local Government District (LGD) 2014

Crimes with a domestic motivation

Ward 2014, District Electoral Area (DEA) 2014, Local Government District (LGD) 2014, Assembly Area (AA), Health & Social Care Trust (HSCT), and Urban/Rural

7. Wider Context (comparison with England and Wales)¹

A key difference in the definition of domestic abuse applied within England & Wales compared with Northern Ireland is the exclusion of victims under the age of 16 from the England & Wales domestic abuse figures. In order to provide more comparable figures, under 16s can be excluded from the Northern Ireland domestic abuse crimes but not from the domestic abuse incident figures.

In Figures 7.1 and 7.2 the Northern Ireland figures are presented for all domestic abuse crime and for domestic abuse crime excluding victims under 16 (the closest available figures in respect of the England & Wales definition). Figure 7.1 provides a comparison for 2021/22 between England & Wales and Northern Ireland in respect of rates per 1,000 population for all domestic abuse crimes and for those classified to violence against the person. Figure 7.2 compares England & Wales with Northern Ireland in respect of crimes with a domestic abuse motivation as a percentage of all recorded crime for violence against the person, sexual offences, criminal damage and all domestic abuse crime. Figures for 2021/22 are the latest available England & Wales figures at time of publication.

It should be noted that legislation in respect of coercive or controlling behaviour was only enacted in Northern Ireland in late February 2022; it became a specific criminal offence in England and Wales in 2015.

Figure 7.1 Domestic abuse crime rates per 1,000 population, 2021/22

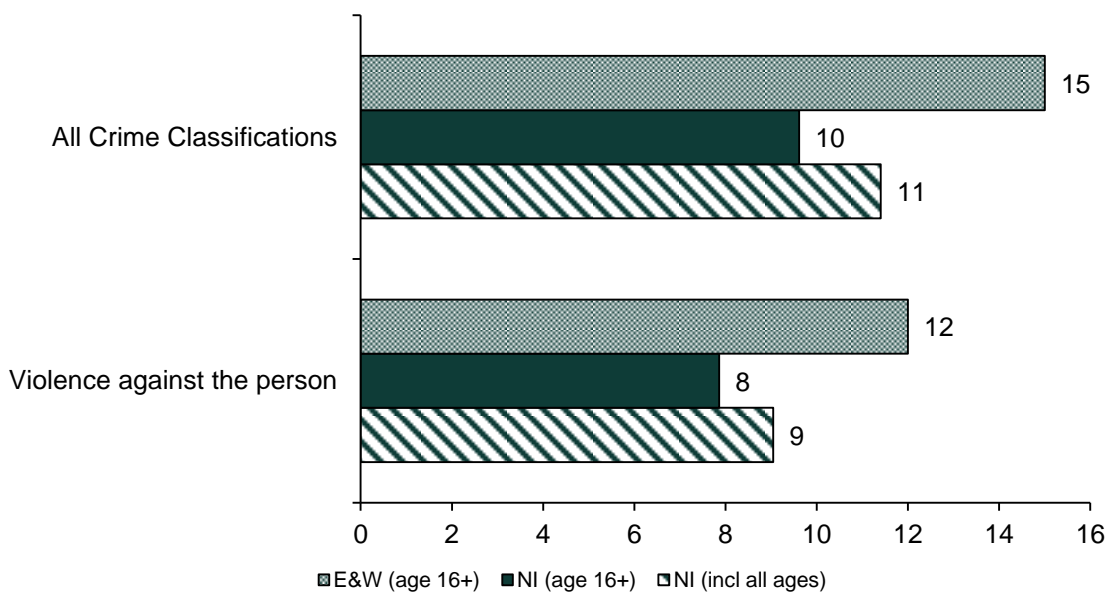
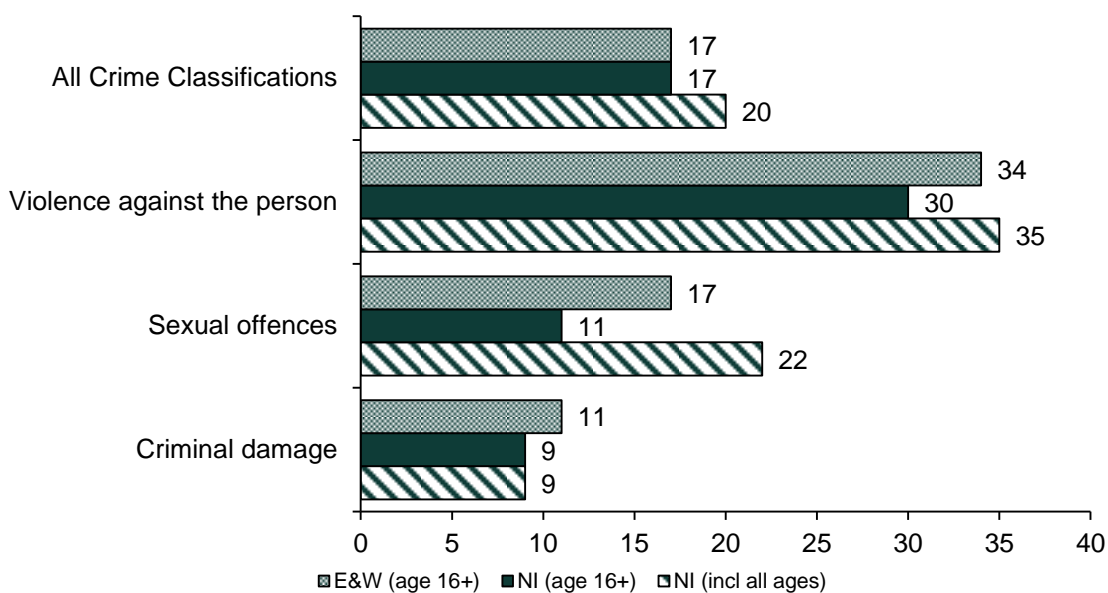


Figure 7.2 Domestic abuse crime as a percentage of all crimes recorded, 2021/22



¹ The England & Wales details have been sourced from the publication [Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2022 \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Appendix 1. Background and Data Quality

Data collection and data quality

PSNI's Statistics Branch started compiling statistics on domestic abuse incidents and crimes in April 2004. While PSNI compiled statistics on domestic abuse prior to 2004/05, the method of data collection and definitions of crimes and crime types was not comparable and so these figures are not included within this bulletin.

The identification of a domestic abuse motivation is derived from a motivation 'tick box' on the system used by PSNI to record crime. The motivation is identified and completed by a police officer or member of police staff for each such reported incident or crime. The correct application of a domestic abuse motivation for all such incidents/crimes is not quality assured by the PSNI's Statistics Branch, but audits and data quality checks are routinely conducted in an attempt to ensure that any under or over-recording is corrected. Crimes with a domestic abuse motivation are included within the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland and these crimes are recorded in compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules. A comprehensive validation and quality assurance process has been set in place to ensure that the numbers and types of crimes being recorded meet the standards set down in these rules.

Crime Statistics User Guide

The [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#) is a reference guide with explanatory notes regarding the issues and classifications which are key to the production and presentation of police recorded crime statistics, incidents and crimes with a domestic or hate motivation and anti-social behaviour statistics. The guide provides background information on:

- definitions and methodology
- recording practices, data collection, compliance and quality assurance;
- revisions policy and data availability
- uses and user engagement

Changes to crime classifications: A list of the police recorded crime classifications and any impact classification changes have had on the police recorded crime time series is provided in Appendix 1 of the user guide.

Police Recorded Crime Outcomes: Section 3.5 of the user guide provides the background to the compilation and presentation of crime outcomes, with Appendix 2 listing the disposal methods available within Northern Ireland.

Additional data available to accompany this release

This release provides an overview of domestic abuse motivated incidents and crimes recorded by the police for each financial year since the start of each data series. Additional Tables are available on the PSNI website to supplement the information contained in this bulletin. The data is available in both excel spreadsheet and open document spreadsheet formats in the [domestic abuse section of the PSNI website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Web links to other information you may be interested in

[Domestic Abuse in Northern Ireland quarterly updates \(opens in a new window\)](#)

[Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#): These statistics are updated on a monthly basis; an annual trends bulletin is also published.

[Crime Outcomes \(opens in a new window\)](#): The latest publication presenting the wider outcomes framework within PSNI and summarising the outcomes that have been assigned to crimes recorded by the police between 2015/16 and 2022/23 was published on 24 November 2023. The publication includes a section on outcomes relating to domestic abuse crimes.

[Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey \(opens in a new window\)](#): Survey results available on the Department of Justice website

[NISRA Data Portal \(opens in a new window\)](#): Access to a range of geographic areas for domestic abuse motivated incidents and crimes recorded by the police (annual totals only) is available through the NISRA Data Portal.

[Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2022](#): Publications are available for information on domestic abuse in England & Wales. There are some key differences in how the definition of domestic abuse is applied within England & Wales compared with Northern Ireland that should be considered. Further details are provided in Section 7 of the Annual Trends bulletin (see link above).

Copies of other PSNI publications are available from the [PSNI website \(opens in a new window\)](#).