

# Chapter 4 - Intimate Personal Violence and Partner Abuse

Coverage: **England and Wales**

Date: **13 February 2014**

Geographical Area: **Country**

Theme: **Crime and Justice**

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## Summary

In accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, statistics based on police recorded crime data have been assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and found not to meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics. The full assessment report can be found on the [UK Statistics Authority](#) website. Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) continue to be badged as National Statistics.

ONS will continue to publish and provide commentary on police recorded crime data pending consultation with users about their needs for such data in the light of the forthcoming inspection of data integrity being carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC). Further information on the interpretation of recorded crime data is provided in the [User Guide](#).

This chapter presents findings from the 2012/13 CSEW self-completion module on intimate violence which is asked of adults aged 16 to 59. The module covers experience of emotional, financial and physical abuse by partners or family members, as well as sexual assaults and stalking by any person. In 2012/13 the module included a special focus on the nature of partner abuse, findings from which are presented here.

- There were 7.1% of women and 4.4% of men who reported having experienced any type of domestic abuse in the last year, equivalent to an estimated 1.2 million female victims of domestic abuse and 700,000 male victims.
- Overall, 30.0% of women and 16.3% of men had experienced any domestic abuse since the age of 16, equivalent to an estimated 4.9 million female victims of domestic abuse and 2.7 million male victims.
- The decline in domestic abuse between the 2004/05 and 2012/13 CSEW surveys was statistically significant. However, the current figure (5.7%) continues a fairly stable trend seen since 2008/09.
- Women were more likely than men to have experienced intimate violence across all headline types of abuse asked about.

- In the last year, partner abuse (non-sexual) and stalking were the most common of the separate types of intimate violence: 4.0% of women and 2.8% of men reported having experienced partner abuse (non-sexual); 4.1% of women and 1.9% of men reported having experienced stalking.
- Two per cent of women and 0.5% of men had experienced some form of sexual assault (including attempts) in the last year.

## Introduction

This chapter includes headline findings from the 2012/13 self-completion module of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) on the extent of, and trends in, intimate violence among men and women aged 16 to 59 resident in households in England and Wales.

A self-completion module on intimate violence was included in the CSEW in 2001 and then on a continuous basis since 2004/05<sup>1</sup>. Intimate violence is a collective term used here to refer to a number of different forms of physical and non-physical abuse consisting of partner abuse, family abuse, sexual assault and stalking. The term reflects the intimate nature either of the victim-offender relationship or of the abuse itself.

### Definitions of abuse in the intimate violence self-completion module

Intimate violence is the collective term used to describe domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking and the categories are defined as follows:

- Domestic abuse: this category combines partner abuse (non-sexual), family abuse (non-sexual) and sexual assault or stalking carried out by a current or former partner or other family member<sup>2</sup>.
- Non-sexual abuse by a partner: physical force, emotional or financial abuse or threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to them carried out by a current or former partner.
- Non-sexual abuse by a family member: physical force, emotional or financial abuse or threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to them carried out by a family member other than a partner (father/mother, step-father/mother or other relative).
- Sexual assault: rape or assault by penetration including attempts ('serious'), indecent exposure, sexual threats or unwanted touching ('less serious') carried out by any person.
- Stalking: one or more incidents (causing distress, fear or alarm) of receiving obscene or threatening unwanted letters, e-mails, text messages or phone calls, having had obscene or threatening information about them placed on the internet, waiting or loitering around home or workplace, following or watching, or interfering with or damaging personal property by any person, including a partner or family member<sup>3</sup>.

There are two headline measures within intimate violence categories in the CSEW: one relates to experiences since the age of 16 and the other is limited to those experiences in the last 12 months. As well as questions on experience of intimate violence, the CSEW self-completion module also includes a set of questions asking victims for further details about the nature of the incidents they experienced. These questions focus in alternate survey years on partner abuse or sexual assault.

The questions in the 2012/13 CSEW focused on the nature of partner abuse and as a result this chapter also includes analysis of these questions, including information about the context of victimisation and whether incidents came to the attention of the police and others.

The under-reporting of crime to the police is known to be particularly acute for intimate violence offences and one of the strengths of the CSEW is that it covers many crimes that are not reported to the police. Estimates of the prevalence of domestic violence (a narrower definition than domestic abuse) based on face-to-face CSEW interviews are regularly published<sup>4</sup> but this crime type is particularly liable to under-reporting in face-to-face interviews. This is due to the issue of willingness to disclose incidents in face-to-face interviews. For example, only a small proportion (9%) of respondents (5% of men and 11% of women in 2012/13) who reported being victims of domestic abuse in the self-completion module had reported that they were victims of domestic violence in the last 12 months in face-to-face interviews. This is likely to be due to both:

- the increased reporting of sensitive issues expected on account of the greater confidentiality provided by self-completion methods; and
- the broader definition of domestic abuse used in the self-completion module<sup>5</sup>.

Comparing those who reported physical domestic abuse in the self completion module with those who reported the similar category of domestic violence in the face-to-face interview provides clearer evidence that respondents are more likely to report sensitive issues in the self completion module. Of those who reported being victims of physical domestic abuse (aged between 16 and 59) in the self-completion module, 13% reported being a victim of domestic violence in the last 12 months in face-to-face interviews (16% for women and 8% for men).

The small number of sexual offences identified in face-to-face CSEW interviews and the likelihood of under-reporting means that figures are too unreliable to report and these data are excluded from the counts of violence in the main CSEW count of crime.

Findings from the self-completion module published here provide a more complete measure of intimate violence victimisation, but as there are several differences in the coverage of the self-completion and face-to-face figures, care should be taken when making comparisons between the two. Detailed tables on the variations of intimate violence experienced by a wider range of personal, household and area characteristics are also presented.

Further information is also available on sexual offences in '[An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales](#)'. This is a joint publication by the Ministry of Justice, Home Office and the Office for National Statistics, published in January 2013, which brought together a range of official statistics from across the crime and criminal justice system on sexual offences. Along with other data sources, this report used combined CSEW data from the years 2009/10 to 2011/12 which differs from the data presented here (which relates to the latest 2012/13 survey year).

In January 2014, the HMIC published figures on the numbers of rapes for each police force in England and Wales including the number of allegations received; the number of cases that were 'cleared up' by the police; and the number cases where the police judged no crime took place. While difficult to interpret, the variability in these figures between the 43 police forces in England and Wales has led to questions over the consistency of recording practices between the police forces.

## Notes

1. The 2001 module differed from the one used since 2004/05 and therefore 2004/05 is used as a baseline for trends.
2. This broadly matches the Government's definition of domestic violence and abuse which came into use in March 2013. More details are available from the [Gov.UK website](#).
3. This is a wider definition than the legal definition of two or more incidents that was introduced in April 2013. The figures presented are still useful for overall trends; however, estimates are likely to be inflated.
4. See Appendix Table A3 of [quarterly crime statistics publications](#).
5. Mainly that the self completion definition of domestic abuse includes emotional or financial abuse or threats to hurt the respondent or someone close to them.

## Prevalence of Intimate Violence - Extent

The self-completion module on intimate violence includes questions covering experiences since the respondent was 16 (treated here as a measure of adult lifetime prevalence) and in the last year (treated here as a measure of recent experience).

As in previous years, women were more likely than men to have experienced intimate violence across all the headline types of abuse asked about ([Appendix table 4.01 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). This is in contrast to findings on overall violent crime victimisation (from the face-to-face survey) in which men, particularly young men, were more likely to have experienced violent crime<sup>1</sup>. However, it is known that in these overall violence estimates from the face to face survey that domestic violence is substantially under-estimated (see introduction).

### Intimate violence experienced since the age of 16

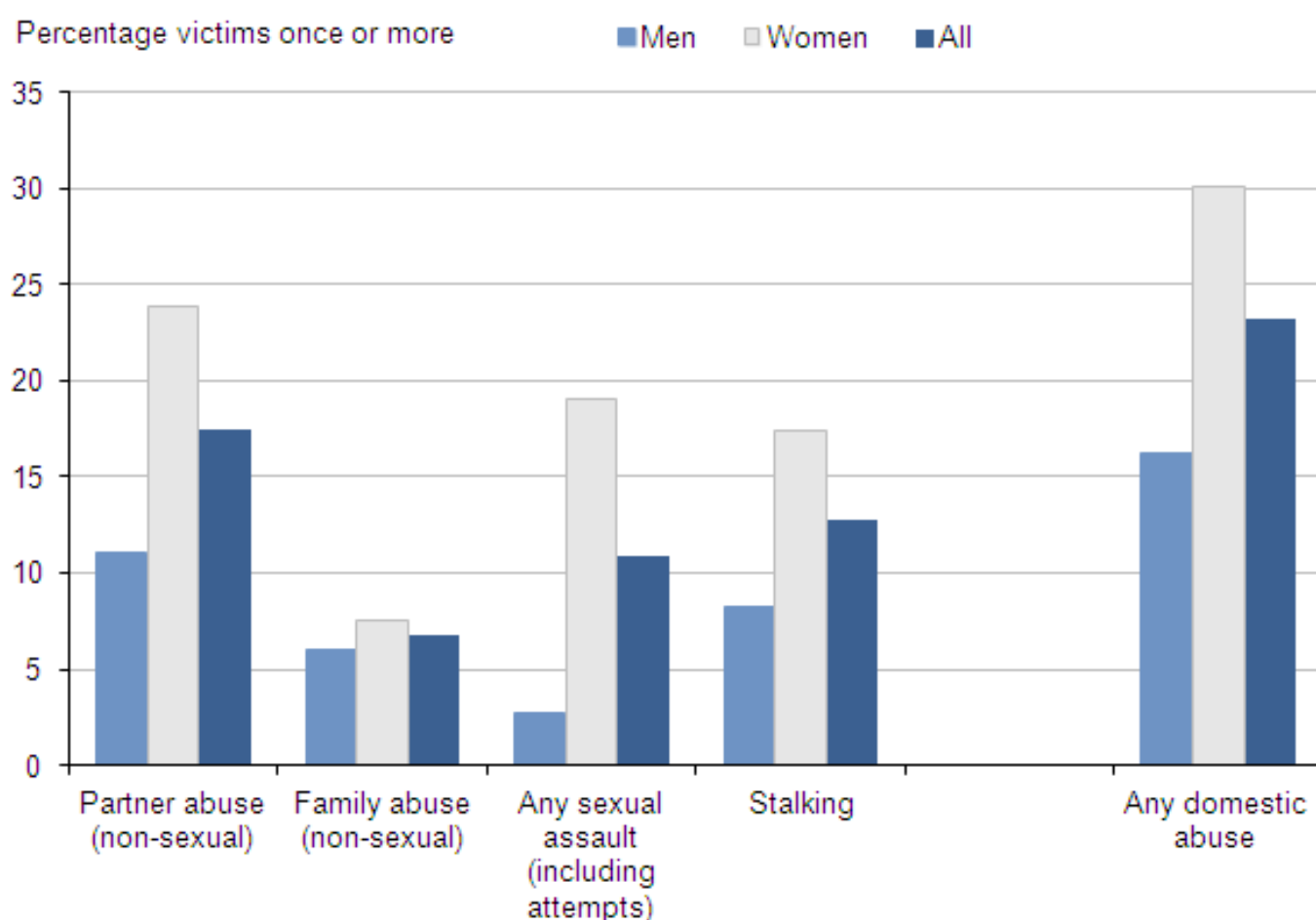
The CSEW 2012/13 found that, overall, 30.0% of women and 16.3% of men had experienced any domestic abuse since the age of 16 ([Appendix table 4.01 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#); Figure 4.1). These figures were equivalent to an estimated 4.9 million female victims of domestic abuse and 2.7 million male victims ([Appendix table 4.02 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

Partner abuse (non-sexual) was the most commonly experienced type of intimate violence, covered by the survey, among both women and men since the age of 16. However, twice as many women (23.8% compared with 11.1% of men) reported having experienced such abuse since the age of 16 ([Appendix table 4.01 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#); Figure 4.1).

The largest difference between the sexes was shown for sexual assault, with 19.1% of women and 2.7% of men having experienced sexual assault (including attempts) since the age of 16 ([Appendix table 4.01 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#); Figure 4.1). Family abuse (non-sexual) was the category with the most similar levels for women and men (7.5% and 6.1%); however, as with the other headline measures, this still represents a statistically significant difference between women and men.

The only single sub-category where there was no statistically significant difference between the prevalence experienced by men and women was family abuse (non-sexual) involving severe force<sup>2</sup> (3.4% for men and 3.6% for women).

**Figure 4.1: Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence since the age of 16, by sex and headline category, 2012/13 CSEW(1)**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics.

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**Intimate violence experienced in the last year**

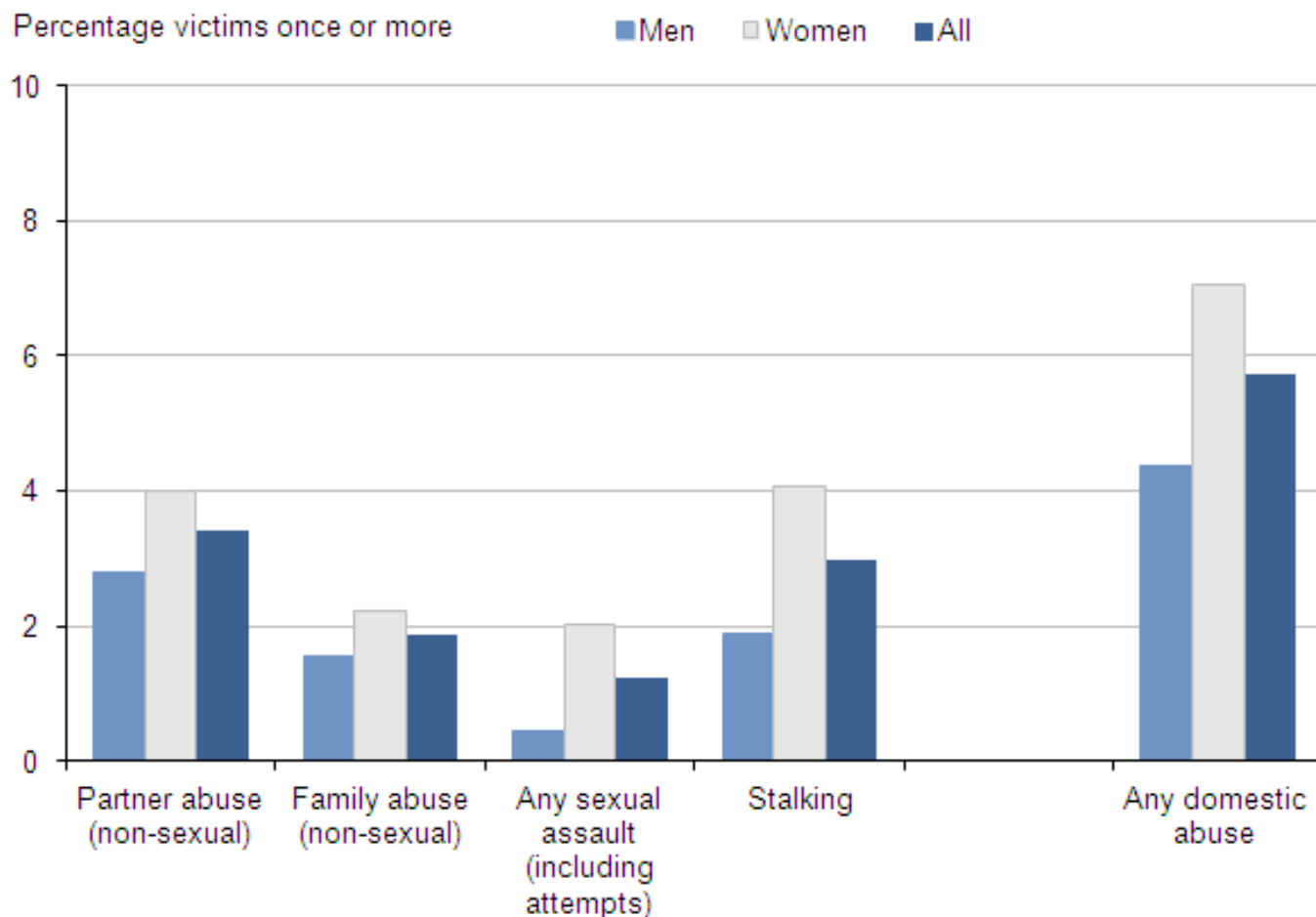
Respondents who had reported at least one incident of being a victim of intimate violence since they were 16 were asked whether they had been a victim in the last year. Women were more likely than men to have been a victim of intimate violence in the last year (7.1% compared with 4.4%), which is consistent with being a victim since the age of 16 (30.0% compared with 16.3%).

The 2012/13 CSEW showed that: (Figure 4.2; [Appendix tables 4.01 and 4.03 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)):

- There were 7.1% of women and 4.4% of men who reported having experienced any type of domestic abuse in the last year, equivalent to an estimated 1.2 million female victims of domestic abuse and 700,000 male victims.
- In the last year, partner abuse (non-sexual) and stalking were the most common of the separate types of intimate violence: 4.0% of women and 2.8% of men reported having experienced partner abuse (non-sexual); 4.1% of women and 1.9% of men reported having experienced stalking.
- Out of the separate types of intimate violence categories, family abuse (non-sexual) had the lowest difference between the prevalence experienced by men compared with women (1.5% and 2.2% respectively). This is still a statistically significant difference.
- Two per cent of women and 0.5% of men had experienced some form of sexual assault (including attempts) in the last year. The majority of these were for less serious sexual assault, such as indecent exposure, unwanted sexual touching or sexual threats.

For all headline measures, the difference between the prevalence for men compared with women was statistically significant. However, prevalence of severe force<sup>2</sup> was not statistically different between men and women in both the family abuse (non-sexual) and the partner abuse (non-sexual) categories. This was also true for family abuse (non-sexual) minor force.

**Figure 4.2: Percentage of adults aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence in the last year, by sex and headline category, 2012/13 CSEW(1)**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics.

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An additional source of information on domestic abuse is available from the police. The police supply data to the Home Office on the number of domestic abuse incidents they have dealt with in their force<sup>3</sup>. Domestic abuse incidents are defined as any incidence of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality<sup>4</sup>.

This collection is wider than police recorded crime – not all domestic abuse incidents will be crimes as defined in law, so therefore many domestic abuse incidents will not subsequently be recorded as crimes. While incidents are recorded under the National Standard for Incident Recording<sup>5</sup> in accordance with the same ‘victim focused’ approach that applies for recorded crime, it is known that

there are variations between police forces in how they record domestic abuse incidents, with some forces unable to supply data for certain years.

In 2012/13, the police recorded 838,026 domestic abuse incidents ([Appendix table 4.07 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#))<sup>6</sup>. Due to the private nature of domestic abuse, the majority of domestic abuse incidents will not come to the attention of the police. These figures are therefore not directly comparable with the CSEW estimates of domestic abuse. Furthermore, CSEW estimates relate to the number of victims rather than the number of incidents.

The number of police recorded domestic abuse incidents has been increasing in recent years. Given that the CSEW shows the trend in domestic abuse to be flat since 2008/09, it is thought that this increase is due to police forces improving their recording of these incidents or more incidents coming to the attention of the police, rather than an actual upward trend in domestic abuse.

## Notes

1. Overall violent crime in the CSEW is measured as part of the face-to-face interview. For estimates of victimisation from the face-to-face interview see Appendix tables 1.01 to 1.04.
2. Severe force involves being kicked, hit, bitten, choked, strangled, threatened with a weapon, threats to kill, use of a weapon or some other kind of force.
3. These figures are not national statistics.
4. Police domestic abuse incident data follow the Government definition of domestic abuse. This definition changed in September 2012 to include those aged 16 and 17.
5. The police record domestic abuse incidents in accordance with the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR); for further details, see Chapter 5 of the User Guide.
6. Data exclude British Transport Police.

## Prevalence of Intimate Violence - Trends

The 2012/13 CSEW self-completion module shows that the prevalence of domestic abuse experienced in the last year (5.7% of adults aged 16 to 59) was the lowest since the 2004/05 survey (7.7%) when the module was first introduced. This latest figure is not statistically different from the prevalence of the last four years.

For the period covering 2004/05 to 2006/07, the CSEW estimated that between 7.7% and 7.8% of adults experienced some form of domestic abuse in the last 12 months. The level then decreased significantly to 5.9% in the 2008/09 survey (the next year for which figures are available) and has been followed by a period of stability where estimates have ranged between 5.7% and 6.1%. The 2012/13 figure of 5.7% continues this fairly stable trend and represents the equivalent of an overall

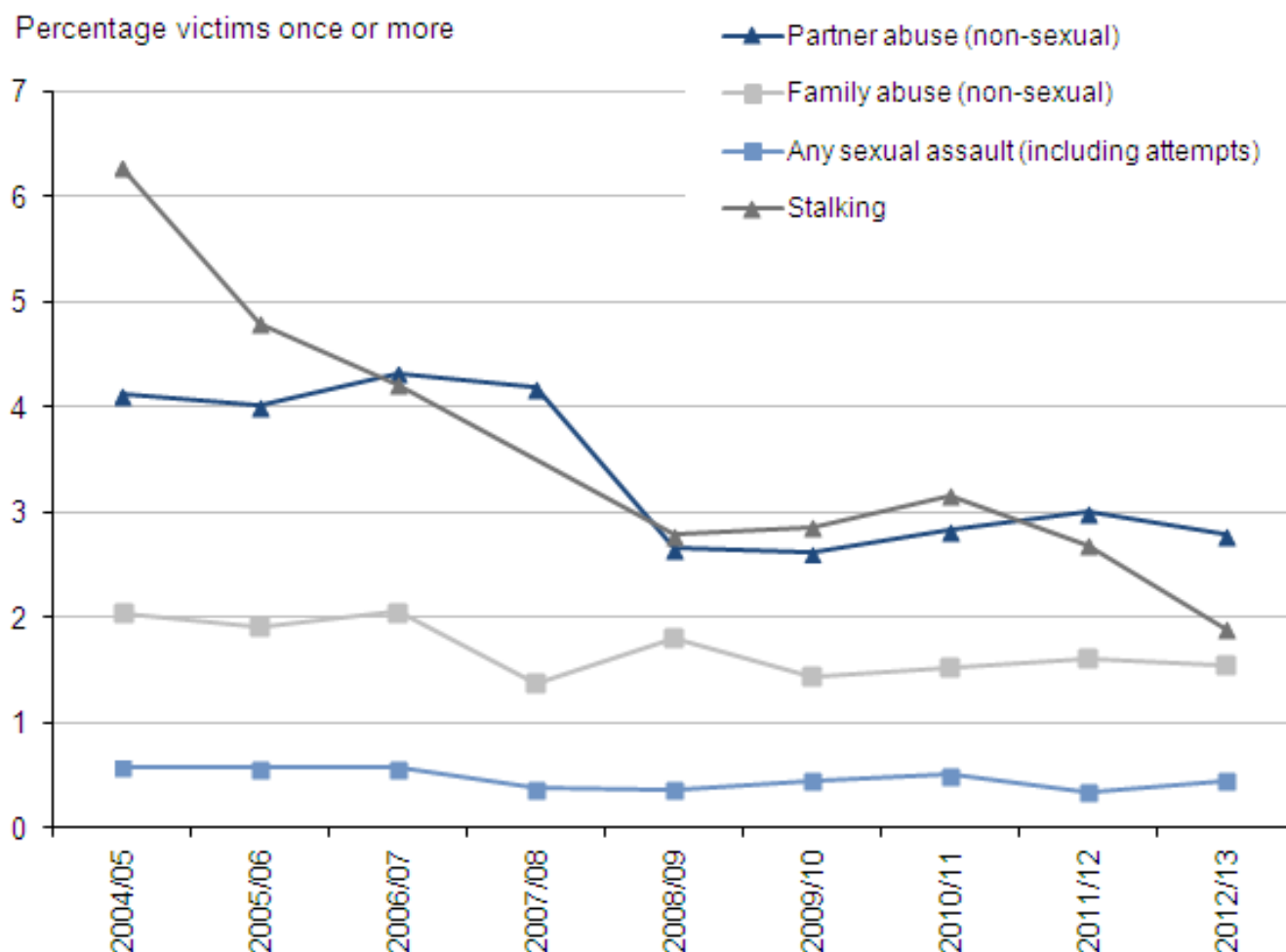


fall from around 2.4 million victims in the 2004/05 survey to 1.9 million victims per year according to the 2012/13 CSEW.

Overall domestic abuse experienced by women in the last year ranged from 8.9% to 9.3% between the survey years 2004/05 to 2006/07. The level then decreased to a prevalence level of 7.5% in the 2008/09 survey. Since then the level has made small but consistent declines which resulted in a statistically significant change between 2004/05 and 2012/13. Domestic abuse experienced by men in the last year also saw a sharp decrease between the survey years 2006/07 and 2008/09 (6.5% to 4.4%). Since then the prevalence has fluctuated between 4.2% and 5.0%, with the latest figure in line with the prevalence seen in the 2008/09 CSEW. While not the lowest figure recorded since the 2004/05 baseline, the latest figure does still represent a statistically significant change between 2004/05 and 2012/13.

A time series for the four main categories (see definitions of abuse section above) that make up domestic abuse can be found in Figures 4.3 and 4.4. The 2004/05 CSEW has been used as the base year as it was the first year that comparable questions were included. A comparable question on stalking was not included in the 2007/08 CSEW self-completion module on intimate violence, and so data for 2007/08 are omitted from the stalking trends time series.

**Figure 4.3: Percentage of men aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence in the last year, by headline category, 2004/05 to 2012/13 CSEW(1)**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics.
2. The stalking time series excludes a data point for 2007/08 due to comparable questions on stalking not being included that year.

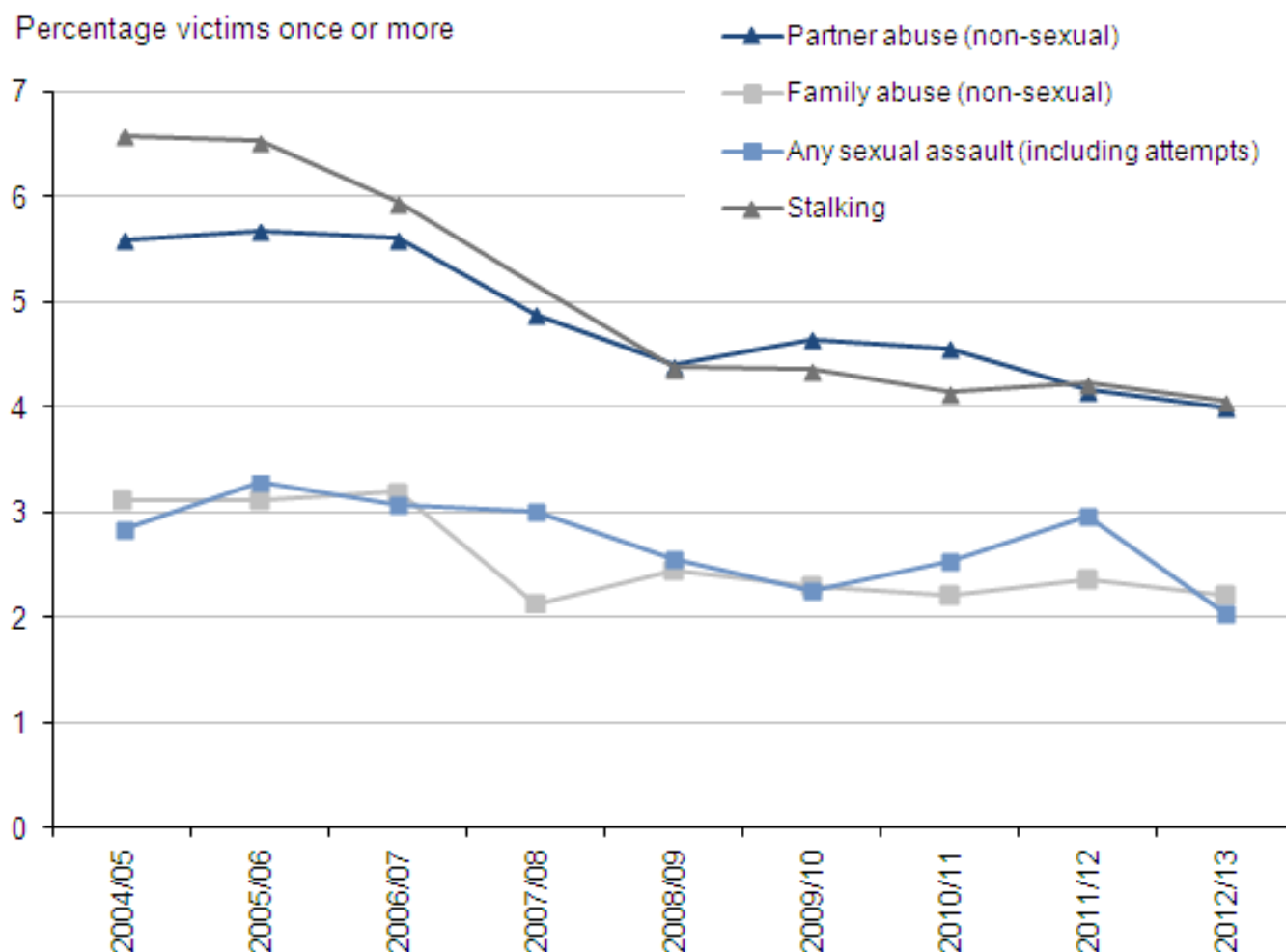
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Between 2004/05 and 2012/13 all the headline measures covered by this module have seen a statistically significant decline except for family abuse (non-sexual) for men and sexual assault for men (Figure 4.3; [Appendix table 4.04 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). Of these measures, stalking has shown the largest decrease in prevalence (6.3% to 1.9% for men and 6.6% to 4.1% for women; Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4).

Between the 2011/12 and 2012/13 surveys, the only headline category in intimate violence to see a statistically significant change in prevalence was sexual assault (decreasing from 1.6% to 1.2%). This was driven by a decrease in the prevalence of less serious sexual assault which fell from 1.5% to 1.1% over the same period ([Appendix table 4.05 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). Examining this by gender shows that the prevalence of less serious sexual assault for men has remained flat (at around 0.3%), whereas women have seen a statistically significant decrease from 2.7% in 2011/12 to 1.8% in 2012/13. However, the 2.7% prevalence for women in 2011/12 was particularly high in that year ([Appendix table 4.04 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)) and the current figure appears to be more in line with the general downward trend seen in recent years.

**Figure 4.4: Percentage of women aged 16 to 59 who experienced intimate violence in the last year, by headline category, 2004/05 to 2012/13 CSEW(1)**



#### Notes:

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics.
2. The stalking time series excludes a data point for 2007/08 due to comparable questions on stalking not being included that year.

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#### Notes

### Intimate Violence in the Last Year by Personal Characteristics

In addition to women being more likely than men to have experienced intimate violence in the last year, victimisation varied by other personal characteristics ([Appendix tables 4.09 and 4.10 \(1.38 Mb\)](#))

[Excel sheet](#)). Many of these characteristics will be closely associated (for example marital status and age) so caution is needed in the interpretation of the effects of these different characteristics when viewed in isolation.

Multivariate analysis performed on 2009/10 CSEW data found that the characteristics that were most closely associated with domestic abuse were use of any drug in the last year, marital status, having a long-term illness or disability and the respondent's sex ([Smith et al., 2011](#)). Other variables such as household structure, age, tenure, occupation, household income, alcohol consumption and number of visits to a nightclub in the last month were also important.

Among both men and women, the prevalence of intimate violence was higher for younger age groups. Women aged between 16 and 19 and between 20 and 24 were more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse (11.3% and 12.5% of the respective population) compared with those aged between 45 and 54 and between 55 and 59 (4.7% and 2.7% respectively).

Similarly, younger men were also more likely to have experienced domestic abuse than older men. Men aged between 16 and 19 (7.5%) and between 20 and 24 (6.9%) were more likely than men aged between 45 and 54 (3.4%) and between 55 and 59 (2.4%) to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year ([Appendix table 4.09 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

Young women were also more likely to be victims of sexual assault in the last year; 7.0% of women aged between 16 and 19 compared with 1.8% of women aged between 25 and 34. In addition women aged between 20 and 24 were more likely to be victims of stalking (6.9%) compared with those aged between 45 and 54 (3.1%).

Women who were separated had the highest prevalence of any domestic abuse in the last year (21.3%) compared with all other groups by marital status (such as married, cohabiting or divorced). This is perhaps unsurprising given the fact that the domestic abuse may have contributed to separation in some cases. The pattern was slightly different for sexual assault with single women (4.3%) being more likely to be victims compared with those who were married, cohabiting or divorced<sup>1</sup>. For domestic abuse and sexual assault, women who were married were less likely to report being a victim (2.7% and 0.7% respectively).

Both women and men with a long-term illness or disability were more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last year (11.3% and 7.0% respectively), compared with those without a long-term illness or disability (6.3% and 4.0%). This pattern was consistent across the sub-categories of domestic abuse with the largest difference occurring for stalking where 7.5% of women with a long-term illness or disability were estimated to be a victim of stalking compared with 3.4% of women without a long term illness or disability.

Women with a degree or diploma were less likely than women with other qualifications to be a victim of any domestic abuse in the last year (5.2% of women with a degree or diploma compared with 9.0% of women with 'A level or equivalent qualifications' and 8.6% of those with 'GCSE or equivalent qualifications'). Women with no qualifications were not statistically different from other groups. Level of qualification might be closely associated with other measures that are also associated with domestic abuse, such as economic status and occupation, which may influence this finding.

Nearly a quarter of women living in lone parent households were victims of domestic abuse in the last year (22.7%) compared with around 1 in 20 of those living in a household with other adults and children (5.3%) or a household with no children (6.3%). The sample of men in lone parent households was too small to undertake the equivalent analysis.

Women living in households in the 20% most deprived areas of the England were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse (9.1%) than women in other areas (5.6% for the 20% least deprived areas and 6.7% in other areas). The prevalence of domestic abuse for men was not statistically different between these three area types.

## Notes

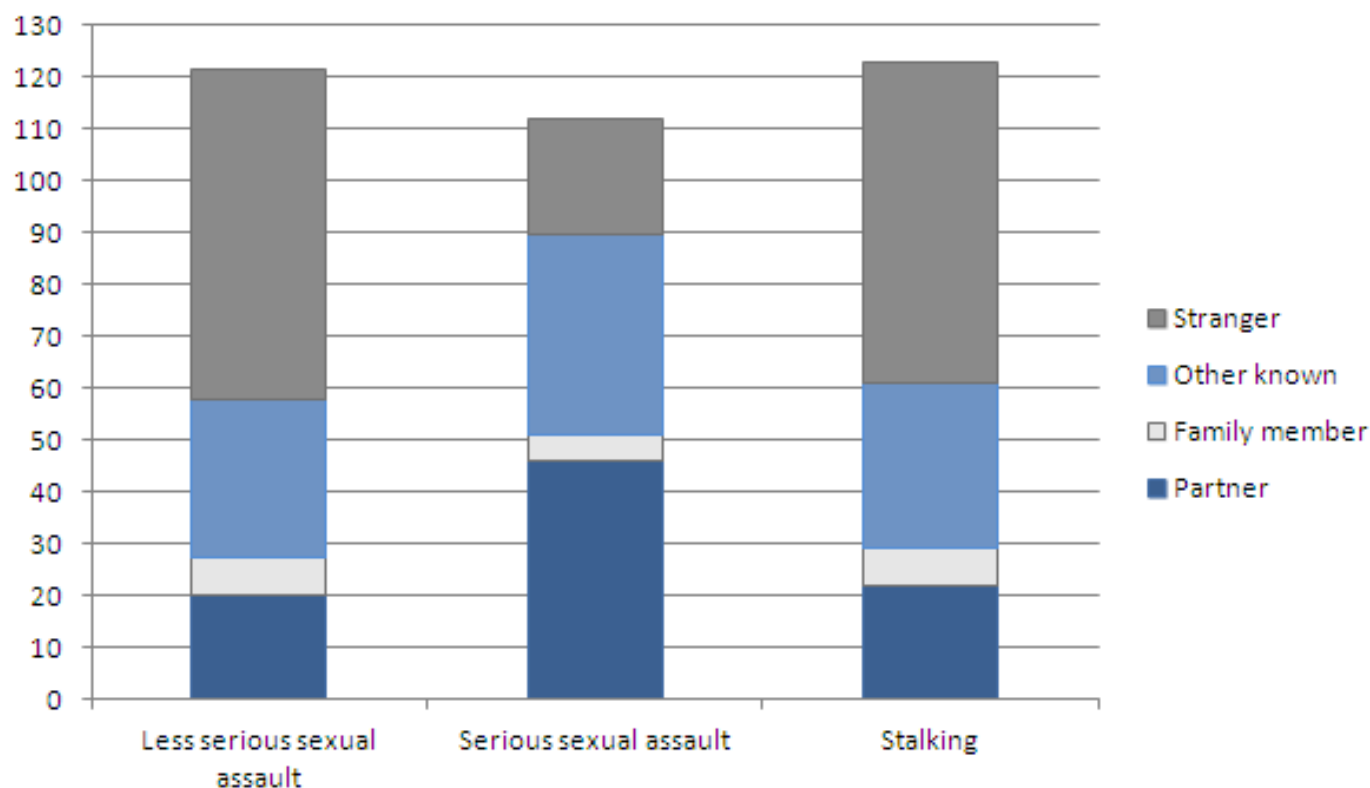
1. This category includes those who have legally dissolved partnerships.

## Intimate Violence by Relationship to Offender

The survey module on intimate violence asks respondents, who have reported being a victim of sexual assault or stalking, what their relationship was with the offender. The relationships asked about are grouped into: partner, family member, other known or stranger. Figure 4.5 ([Appendix table 4.08 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)) shows the victim-offender relationship for women for experiences since the age of 16. The equivalent analysis has not been repeated for men as the number of experiences of serious sexual assault was too small to analyse.

Figure 4.5 shows that the majority of less serious sexual assault female victims did not know the offender (64%). There was a similar pattern for female victims of stalking where 62% of victims had experienced stalking where the offender was a stranger. In contrast, for serious sexual assault the pattern was different; for the majority of female victims the offender was a partner or someone who was known to them (46% and 38% respectively) with around a quarter reporting the offender as a stranger (23%). In each instance, the offender being a family member makes up the lowest proportion, with this proportion being of a similar level for each of the three categories.

**Figure 4.5: Victim-offender relationship for sexual assault or stalking experienced since age 16 by women aged 16-59, 2012/13 CSEW(1,2)**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics.
2. Figures sum to more than 100% as respondents, who had experienced sexual assault or stalking, were asked about the offender for all incidents since age 16.

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**Nature of Partner Abuse – Types of Abuse**

Further questions were asked in the 2012/13 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) to provide more detail on the circumstances of partner abuse experienced in the past year.

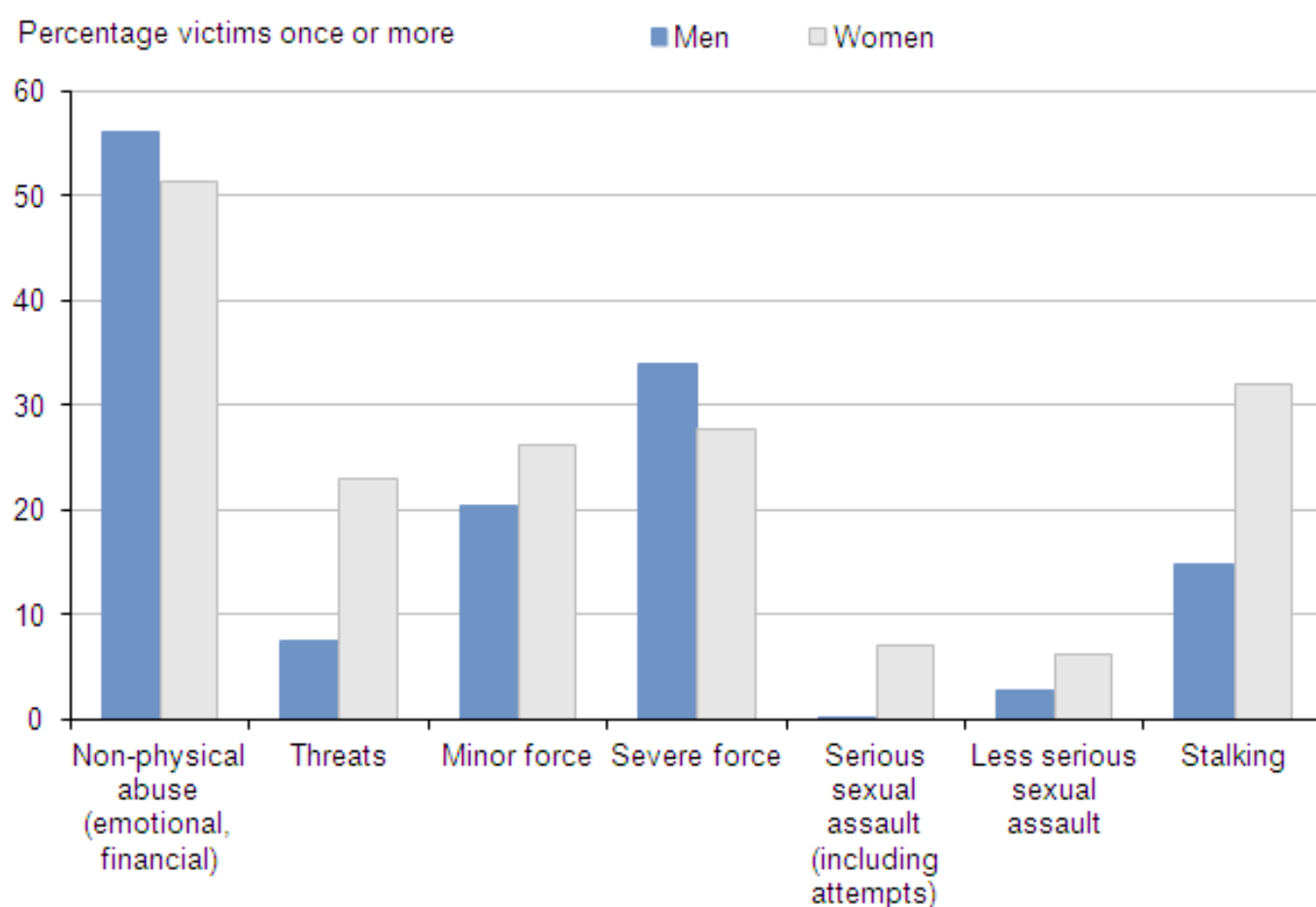
For those respondents who had been a victim of partner abuse in the last year, they were more likely to have experienced non-physical abuse (emotional and financial) rather than physical abuse. This is true for male and female victims. Respondents are able to select more than one type of abuse experienced.

Female partner abuse victims were more likely to experience non-physical abuse (emotional, financial) (51%) than to experience physical abuse such as force, either minor (26%) or severe<sup>1</sup> (28%), or threats (23%). Male partner abuse victims were also more likely to experience non-

physical abuse (56%) than severe force (34%), minor force (20%) or threats (8%) ([Appendix table 4.11 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#); Figure 4.6).

Female victims of partner abuse reported a statistically higher level of 'threats' than men (23% and 8% respectively; Figure 4.6). Female victims of partner abuse also experienced statistically higher levels of sexual assault than men (11% and 3% respectively) ([Appendix table 4.11 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). There was no statistical difference between female and male victims for less serious sexual assault, minor force or severe force.

**Figure 4.6: Type of partner abuse experienced by partner abuse victims in the last year, by sex, 2012/13 CSEW(1,2)**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics.
2. Respondents are asked to select all types of abuse they have experienced in the last year.

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Female partner abuse victims were twice as likely to have experienced stalking as male victims (32% compared with 15%). This is a different finding to the last time the data were produced

(2010/11) when the difference between men and women wasn't statistically different (34% compared with 32%). Between 2008/09 and 2012/13, the percentage of male partner abuse victims experiencing stalking had declined from 37% to 15%. For female victims the decrease has been much smaller with 40% of partner abuse victims experiencing stalking in 2008/09 compared with 32% in 2012/13. These figures capture the percentage of partner abuse victims experiencing stalking and not the number of times that they experience such incidents.

The definition of stalking applied in the CSEW covers a wider range of actions and behaviours compared to the legal definition including being followed; being sent unwanted messages that were obscene or threatening and having personal property interfered with. The CSEW does not use the phrase 'stalking' to ensure that actions and behaviours experienced are recorded rather than the respondent's interpretation of the term.

## Notes

1. Severe force involves being kicked, hit, bitten, choked, strangled, threatened with a weapon, threats to kill, use of a weapon or some other kind of force.

## Partner Abuse - Repeat Victimization

For both female and male victims of partner abuse, the most common response when asked about how many times they had experienced abuse<sup>1</sup> was 'Don't wish to answer' (39% for females and 32% for males; [Appendix table 4.12 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). Combining this response with the 'Don't know' response category shows that just over 50% of respondents did not provide an answer to this question; therefore the figures should be interpreted with caution.

Women victims of partner abuse were more likely to have been abused more than once in the last year by their partner (30%) than to have only been abused once (19%) ([Appendix table 4.12 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). For men there was no statistically significant difference between being abused once or more than once (22% and 27%). The level of repeat victimisation is not statistically different between men and women. It is possible that any difference between men and women are being masked by the high percentage of 'Don't wish to answer' and 'Don't know' responses.

The percentage of victims of partner abuse reporting that they had been abused more than once in the last year has seen a significant decline between the 2004/05 and 2012/13 surveys (34% to 29%). However, during this period the combined categories 'Don't know/can't remember' and 'Don't wish to answer' have seen a significant increase (43% to 51%). Those reporting abuse occurring once in the last year has remained relatively flat.

## Notes

1. Respondents are given range categories to respond to how many times they had experienced abuse rather than giving a single number of incidents.



## Effects of Partner Abuse and Medical Support

The CSEW intimate violence module also asks partner abuse victims questions on physical injury and other non-physical effects experienced as a result of the abuse. If the victim had experienced more than one incident of partner abuse, the question was asked of the most recent incident ([Appendix table 4.13 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

The majority of partner abuse victims did not sustain a physical injury as a result of the abuse, and for those that did sustain an injury, these were often relatively minor. This is in the context that just over half of respondents reported experiencing non-physical abuse ([Appendix table 4.11 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). Around a quarter (24%) of partner abuse victims reported that they sustained some sort of physical injury. The most common type of injuries sustained were minor bruising or black eye (16%) and scratches (13%). There were no statistically significant differences between the prevalence of physical injury for male and female victims (22% and 24% respectively).

Victims were presented with a list of other non-physical effects<sup>1</sup> and were asked if they had sustained any of these as a result of the abuse. Female victims were more likely than male victims to report that they had sustained non-physical effects (52% and 38% respectively; Figure 4.7). For both male and female victims, the category most likely to be reported was 'mental or emotional problems' (32% of male victims and 45% of female victims) followed by 'stopped trusting people or difficulty in other relationships' (14% of male and 23% of female victims).

**Figure 4.7: Non-physical effects felt as a result of the partner abuse experienced in the last year, by sex, 2012/13 CSEW(1)**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics.

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(33 Kb)

Partner abuse victims who had sustained a physical injury or had experienced other effects as a result of the abuse were also asked if they had received medical attention ([Appendix table 4.14 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). Around a third (33%) of partner abuse victims who had experienced any physical injury or other effects received some sort of medical attention. This did not vary between female and male victims (32% and 33% respectively). This is a different finding to the 2010/11 CSEW where the difference was significant (32% for female and 15% for male victims). The increase in medical attention received by men between 2010/11 and 2012/13 was statistically significant.

Victims were also asked where they received medical attention with the majority (81%) of such victims doing so at a GP/doctor's surgery, 21% had gone to a hospital's Accident and Emergency department and 18% to a specialist mental health or psychiatric service.

## Notes

1. Such as "mental or emotional problems" or "stopped trusting people/difficulty in other relationships".

## Nature of Partner Abuse - Influence of Alcohol and Illicit Drugs

Victims of partner abuse in the last year were also asked whether they thought the offender (or offenders) was under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs at the time of the incident. They were also asked whether they (the victim) were under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs. For those who had experienced more than one incident, only the most recent incident was asked about.

Victims were more likely to report that they believed the offender was under the influence of alcohol (24%) rather than illicit drugs (9%) ([Appendix table 4.15 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). Female victims were more likely than male victims to perceive that the offender was under the influence of alcohol (28% compared with 18%). This was true also in relation to the influence of drugs (11% of female victims compared with 5% of male).

Victims were more likely to report that the offender was under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs than they themselves. However 10% of victims reported that they were under the influence of alcohol and 1% reported that they were under the influence of illicit drugs the last time they suffered abuse. There was no statistically significant difference between the male and female victims with regards to reporting whether they were under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs.

Caution should be taken interpreting these figures due to the relatively large proportion of 'don't know' or 'don't want to answer' responses for some of these questions. This was particularly the case for the question on whether the offender was perceived to be under the influence of alcohol (16%) and the question on whether the victim was under the influence of alcohol (14%).

These questions covered above are part of the partner abuse module and specifically refer to periods when the abuse was taking place.

## General alcohol and drug consumption

Also included in the self-completion module is a section on drugs misuse and alcohol consumption that includes questions on the level of the respondents' general alcohol consumption, frequency of drunkenness and illicit drug taking. This section focuses on alcohol consumption and drug taking in general and any association with partner abuse.

These results should be interpreted with caution as many other influencing characteristics (such as age) may be closely associated with alcohol consumption and taking illicit drugs. Multivariate analysis performed on 2009/10 CSEW data found that, among other factors, illicit drug use in the last year was associated with a higher risk of domestic abuse and a higher risk of sexual

assault. However, frequency of alcohol consumption was found not to be a statistically significant characteristic with regards to sexual assault victimisation and was not included in the logistic regression for domestic abuse ([Smith et al., 2011](#)). Similar results may be expected with partner abuse victimisation but further research, which has not been carried out, is required before conclusions can be drawn about the association between drugs, alcohol and partner abuse victimisation.

Any connections presented here between alcohol consumption, drunkenness, illicit drug taking and partner abuse may be explained, in part, by the age of the adults. It is not possible to tell a direction of causality. Young adults (aged between 16 and 24) consumed alcohol more frequently, were drunk more frequently and were more likely to take illicit drugs ([Smith and Flatley, 2011](#)).

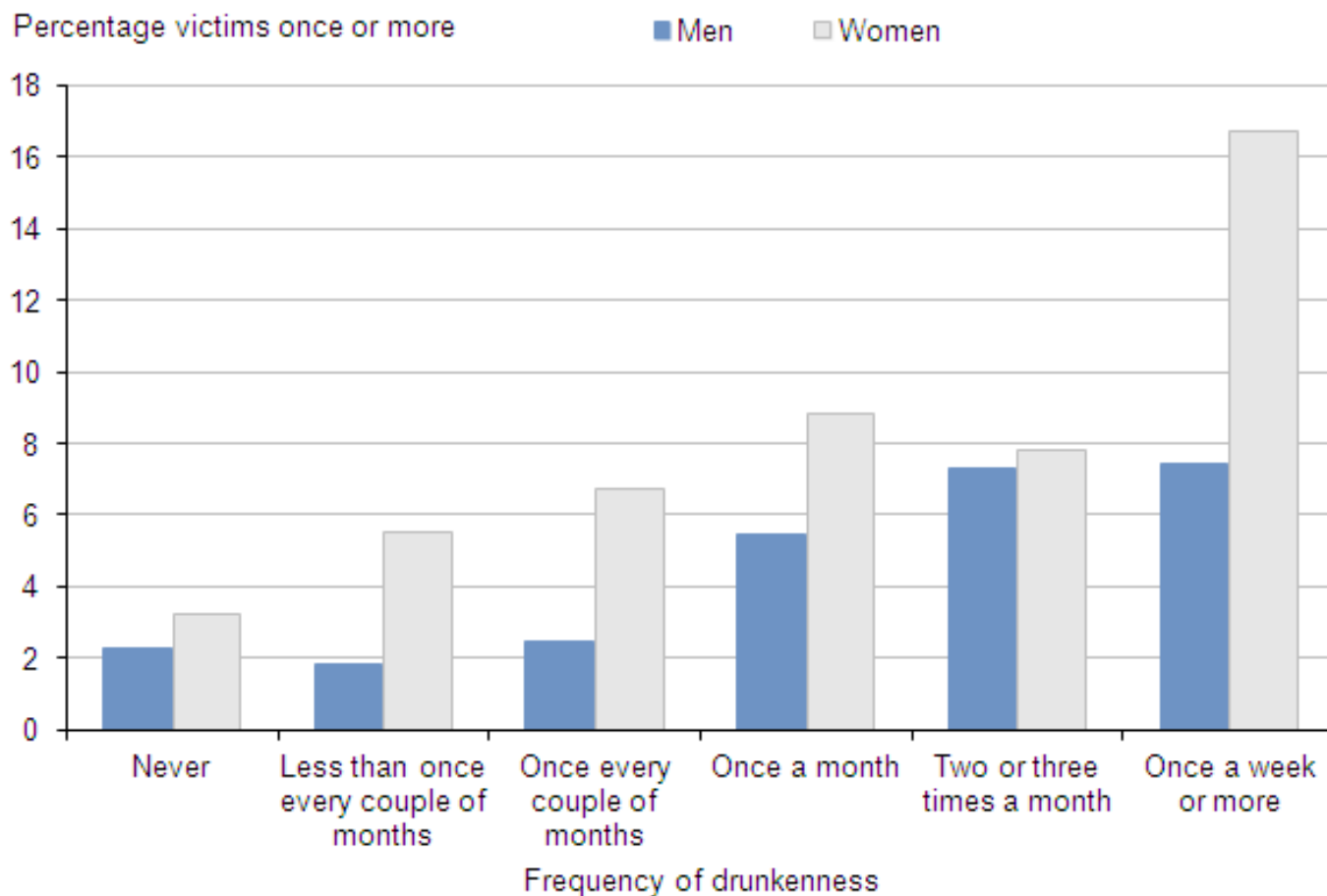
Young adults were also more likely than older adults to be a victim of partner abuse when viewed in isolation of other effects ([Smith et al., 2011](#)). These two points may offer some explanation as to why there was an apparent association between alcohol, illicit drugs and partner abuse victimisation. However, when focusing on those aged between 16 and 24, similar patterns with regards to alcohol consumption, illicit drug use and partner abuse emerge as for those aged between 25 and 59 ([Appendix tables 4.16 to 4.18 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

Caution should be taken when making inferences about the relationship between alcohol consumption, illicit drug-taking and partner abuse victimisation. The victims' alcohol consumption and illicit drug use may affect or be affected by their experience of partner abuse.

Adults aged between 16 and 59 were more likely to have experienced partner abuse if they reported having been drunk once a week or more (11%) than if they had reported having been drunk once every couple of months (4%). Around three times as many adults aged between 16 and 59 who had taken illicit drugs in the last year reported being a victim of partner abuse compared with those who hadn't taken drugs in the last year (11% compared with 3%).

Women who reported getting drunk once every couple of months or less than once every couple of months were more likely than men to be a victim of partner abuse (7% compared with 2% and 6% compared with 2%). For women and men who reported getting drunk once a week or more, the difference in prevalence was significant at the 90% level only (17% compared with 7%). For all other categories the difference between male and female prevalence was not significantly different (Figure 4.8). Examining the prevalence by age shows no significant differences between the 16 to 24 and 25 to 59 age categories (Figure 4.9).

**Figure 4.8: Prevalence of partner abuse victimisation in the last year, by sex and the frequency of drunkenness, 2012/13 CSEW(1)**



**Notes:**

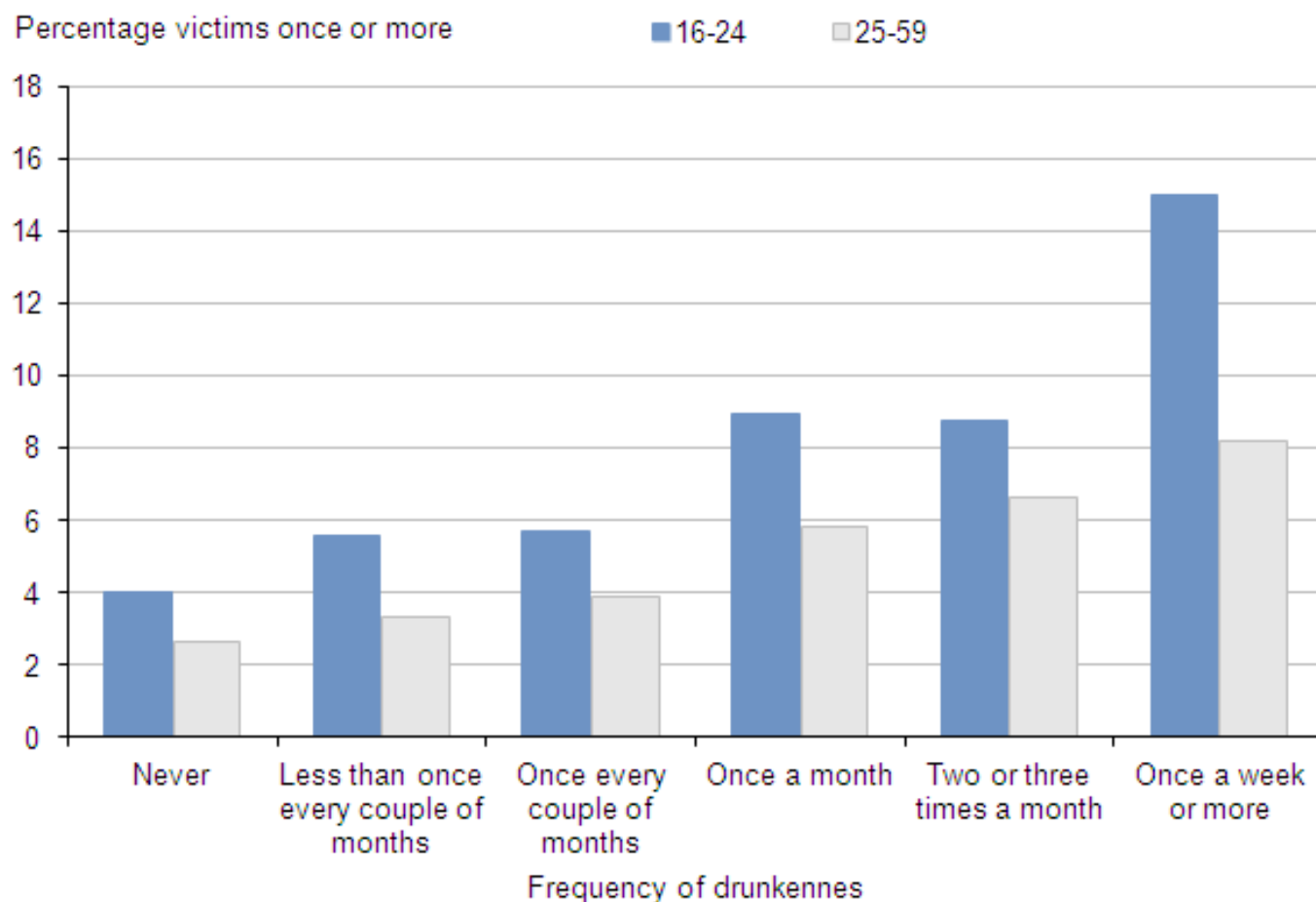
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics.

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**Figure 4.9: Prevalence of partner abuse victimisation in the last year, by age and the frequency of drunkenness, 2012/13 CSEW(1)**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics.

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**Partner Abuse - Leaving Shared Accommodation**

As part of the suite of follow-up questions on the nature of partner abuse, adults aged 16 to 59 who have experienced partner abuse in the last year were asked if they shared accommodation with their abusive partner, whether they left that shared accommodation and other questions surrounding shared accommodation. If the victim has had more than one abusive partner, these questions were asked of the most recent abusive partner ([Appendix tables 4.19 to 4.21 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

Around a quarter (24%) of partner abuse victims that reported abuse in the last year stated that they currently shared, or had previously shared, accommodation with their abusive partner. Of these victims 35% reported leaving the accommodation because of the abuse, even if it was for only one night. This was not statistically different between female and male victims. Of those who left

the shared accommodation, 60% spent their first night with relatives, while staying with friends or neighbours was the next most likely destination (20%).

Reasons mentioned most frequently for not leaving the shared accommodation were 'love or feelings for partner' (53%), 'presence of children' (43%) and 'never considered leaving' (36%) ([Appendix table 4.21 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). These findings are similar for previous years except for the reason of 'love or feelings for partner' which has increased significantly since the 2010/11 CSEW (34%)<sup>1</sup>.

## Notes

1. See [Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2010/11: Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2010/11](#)

## Sources of Support for Partner Abuse Victims

In the CSEW, victims of partner abuse were also asked who they had spoken to about the abuse they had experienced. For the purpose of analysis, these have been split into three types of support: someone known personally to them (for example a friend or relative), someone in a professional organisation (for example police, health professionals or a local council department) or someone in another support organisation (for example Victim Support or a helpline) ([Appendix table 4.22 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

The majority (79%) of victims told someone about the abuse that they suffered, with women (83%) being more likely to tell someone than men (71%). Both female and male victims were most likely to tell someone they knew personally about the abuse (76% and 61%) with most telling a family member or relative (57% of women and 40% of men) followed by telling a friend or a neighbour (36% women and 33% men).

A third of all victims of partner abuse told someone in an official position about the abuse. Women were nearly twice as likely as men to tell such an individual (38% and 22% respectively) with women being much more likely than men to tell the police (27% and 10% respectively). Women were more likely to tell other support professionals or organisations than men (29% and 16% respectively). This included female victims being more likely to tell victim support (8% compared with 2%) or a helpline (4% compared with 1%) than male victims. These findings on who the victim told are broadly similar to those in the 2010/11 CSEW<sup>1</sup>.

## Police and the criminal justice system

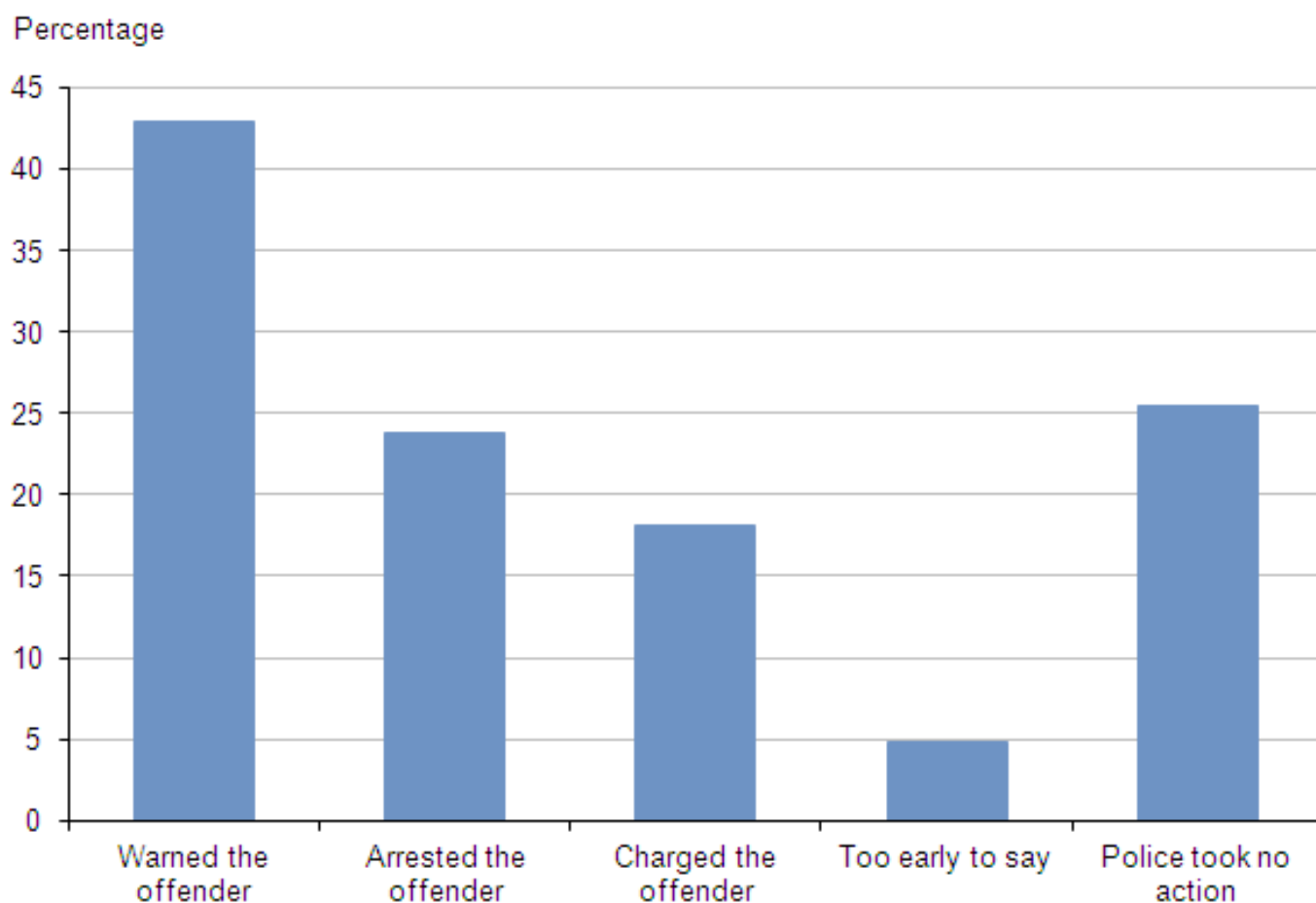
Respondents who answered that they had been a victim of partner abuse were asked questions surrounding issues on reporting the abuse to the police and the courts (Figure 4.10; [Appendix tables 4.23 to 4.27 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

For victims of partner abuse, 21% had reported the abuse to the police. For those that did not report the abuse, the most common reasons given were the abuse was too trivial or not worth reporting

(45%), it was a private, family matter and not the business of the police (31%), and the victim didn't think the police could help (18%).

Respondents where the police has come to know about the abuse were asked what actions were taken by the police. The police took some sort of action in 75% of cases. The most common action taken by the police was to warn the offender (43%) or arrest the offender (24%). In 18% of cases the offender was charged. These results are not statistically different from the 2010/11 CSEW findings.

**Figure 4.10: What action was taken by the police when told about the partner abuse , 2012/13 CSEW(1)**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics.

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In those cases where the police had taken some action against the offender, the respondent reported that around a quarter (27%) of these cases made it to court. For the cases that did not go to court, 37% of the respondents said that they, the victim, decided not to take further action, 34%



said that the police or Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decided not to take further action and 36% said that it didn't make the courts for some other reason.

Victims who told the police about the partner abuse they experienced were asked how satisfied they were with the outcome, whether they felt safer as a result of the outcome and how helpful they found the police ([Appendix table 4.27 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). Around two-thirds were either very satisfied (32%) or fairly satisfied (31%) with the outcome they got from going to the police. Just under half (48%) felt safer while nearly a quarter felt less safe (24%) as a result of the action.

Around two-thirds found the police either very helpful (36%) or fairly helpful (33%). While the rest of respondents found them either slightly helpful (16%) or not at all helpful (15%).

## Notes

1. See [Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2010/11: Supplementary Volume 2 to Crime in England and Wales 2010/11](#)

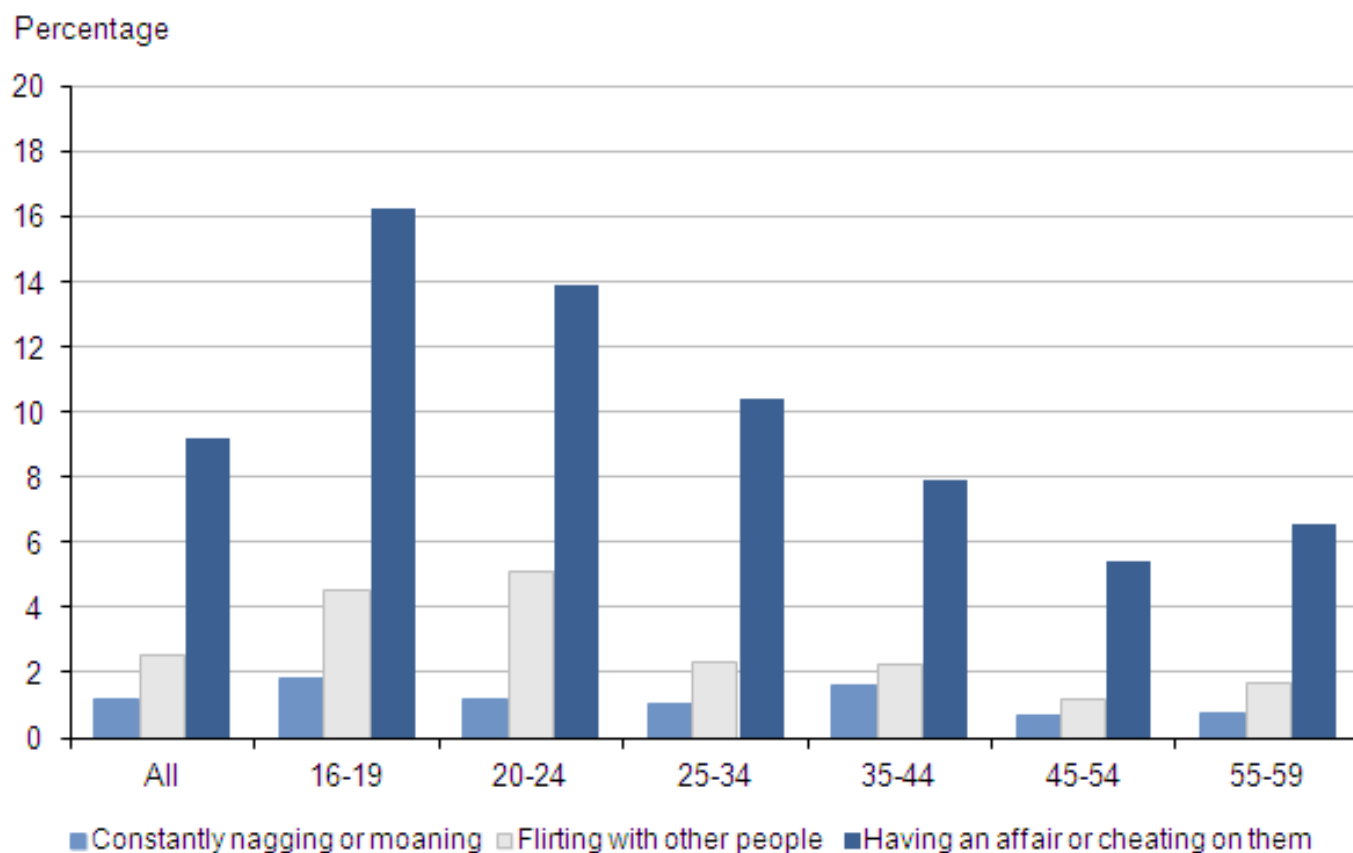
## Attitudes to Partner Abuse

In addition to questions about experience of partner abuse, questions were included in the survey to gauge public attitudes towards such violence. All adults aged 16 to 59 were asked in the self-completion section of the interview about their attitudes towards partner violence.

Seventy-six percent of respondents felt that it was always unacceptable to hit or slap their partner in response to their partner having an affair whereas around 1 in 10 of respondents felt that it is mostly or sometimes acceptable (9%). Respondents aged between 16 and 19 were more likely to think that it was acceptable at least some of the time than those aged between 35 and 44 (16% and 8% respectively) and all older age groups (Figure 4.11).

For each of the three categories there was no statistically significant difference between the total percentage of men and women who felt that to hit or slap their partner was acceptable at least sometimes.

**Figure 4.11: Percentage who say it is always, mostly or sometimes acceptable for someone to hit or slap their partner in response to different behaviours, 2012/13 CSEW(1)**



**Notes:**

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics.

**Download chart**

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(33.5 Kb)

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UK Statistics Authority, 2014, '[Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics: Statistics on Crime in England and Wales](#)'

## Background notes

1. A list of the organisations given [pre-publication access](#) to the contents of this bulletin can be found on the ONS website
2. In accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, statistics based on police recorded crime data have been assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and found not to meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics. The full assessment report can be found on the [UK Statistics Authority](#) website.

While data relating to the Homicide Index used in this release is covered by the de-designation of all data based on police recorded crime, Home Office and ONS statisticians do not have significant concerns about the accuracy of recording of homicides. However, ONS accepts that there is currently insufficient evidence to provide that assurance. The ONS will work with partners to obtain fuller information on the quality of the Homicide Index and will request a re-assessment by the UK Statistics Authority in due course.

Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) continues to be badged as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

For more information on statistics designated as National Statistics, see background note 3.

3. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

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