

Focus on...

Domestic Violence

February 2014

The definition of domestic violence in the UK is: *Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:*

Physical

Psychological

Sexual

Emotional

Financial

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

Key facts & figures

3,806

incidents of domestic violence in Islington. 2012/13

1,571

offences of domestic violence in Islington. 2012/13

79%

of domestic violence victims in Islington are female. 2012/13

85%

of domestic violence perpetrators in Islington are male. 2012/13

Key programmes and services

- **Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)** - monthly multi agency conference to review cases of those victims assessed as high risk and put support plans around them to reduce their risk.
- **Domestic Violence Persistent Perpetrators Panel (DVPPP)** - monthly multi agency conference to review cases of the most persistent perpetrators and plan how to reduce the risk they pose.
- **Support and Advocacy Service for male and female victims** - specialist team of domestic violence advocates and caseworkers that support male and female victims with their range of needs.
- **Samira Project for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) victims** - specialist outreach service targeting women from BME communities who are experiencing or have experienced abuse.
- **Activ*8 Project for Complex Needs victims** - specialist caseworker supporting victims with multiple and complex needs (including mental health, substance misuse, offending, sex working, etc.).

Key measures for reducing inequalities

- **Gender specific services** - domestic violence is a gendered crime and women are disproportionately affected by it. Therefore we have to recognise that women are in greater need as victims and have some women only services to support them in a safe space.
- **Specialist BME services** - victims from black and minority ethnic communities often have additional vulnerabilities, and some communities are vulnerable to particular forms of abuse such as FGM or 'honour' based violence. It is crucial to have culturally specific services to address these inequalities.
- **Early intervention** - witnessing or experiencing domestic violence has huge impacts on outcomes in terms of education, employment, and physical and mental health. We must focus on identifying domestic violence as early as possible and supporting victims and their families to move on from abuse.

Key population groups

Domestic violence affects everyone regardless of age, ethnicity, culture or socioeconomic circumstances. Men and women are affected, and domestic violence can occur in familial relationships (e.g. between siblings) as well as in intimate relationships within couples of the same or opposite sex. However some populations are at higher risk, or are at risk from particular forms of domestic violence, including harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or 'honour' based violence:

Women
Nationally 80% of domestic abuse victims are women

Transgender people
Surveys have found that up to 80% have experienced abuse in relationships

BME groups
Populations from certain cultural backgrounds may be at risk of FGM or 'honour' based violence.

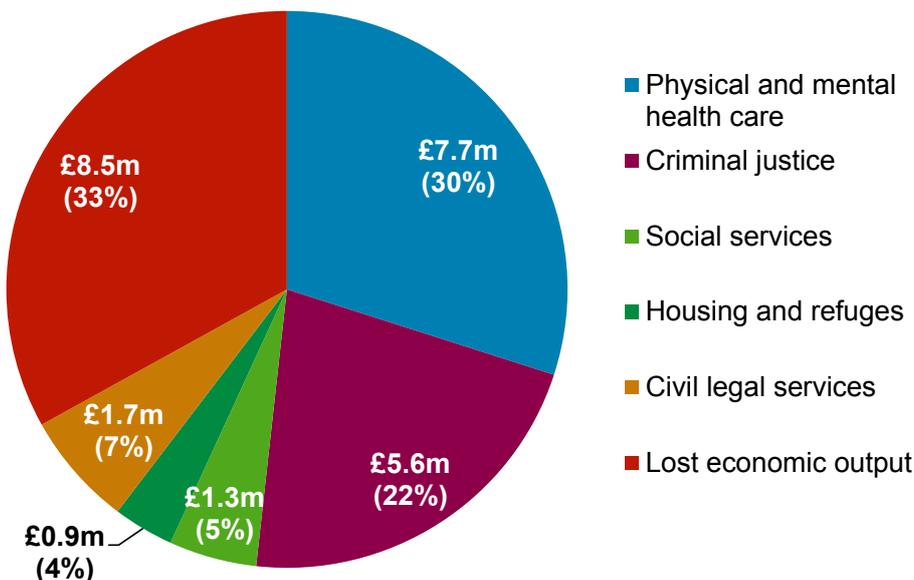
What influences domestic violence?

There are a number of risk factors that, whilst alone do not cause domestic violence, can increase the chances that abuse may begin, increase the level of risk to a victim, or make a victim more vulnerable to abuse and less able to seek help. There are also some risk factors, such as drugs and alcohol, that have been shown to increase the frequency or severity of attacks.



Cost of domestic violence

Annual cost of domestic violence in Islington by service



Estimates are that domestic violence costs £5.47 billion per year in England. This is a combination of costs to public services (criminal justice, health, social services, housing, civil legal) and lost economic output.

This has been broken down by local authority area and it is estimated that the annual cost to Islington is £25.7 million, with the highest cost to physical and mental health services (£7.7 million).

* Based on research by Professor Sylvia Walby, *Cost of Domestic Violence: Update 2009* and borough estimates from figures released by Trust for London and Henry Smith Charity in 2011.

THE ISLINGTON PICTURE

From police data we are able to show the reports of domestic violence received by the local police. An incident is any report to the police of a domestic disturbance. This could be a 999 call from the victim, another witness in the house, or a neighbour. An offence is where the police have attended a scene and found that a crime has been committed.

3,806
incidents of Domestic Violence. 2012/13

1,571
offences of domestic violence. 2012/13

Prevalence

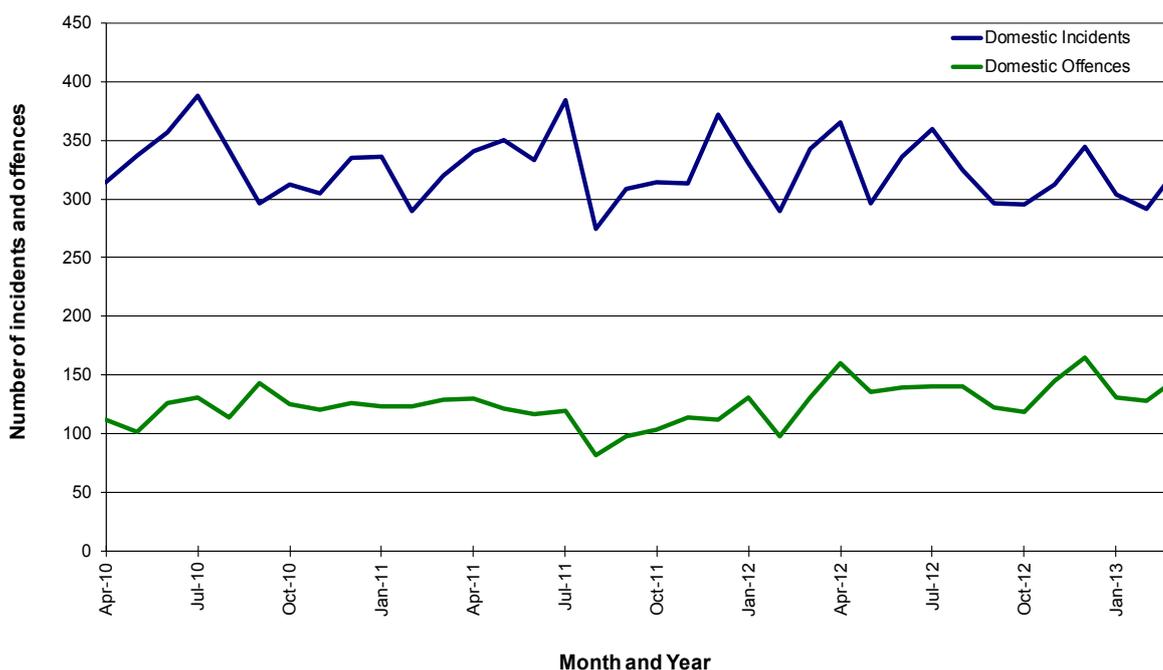
Rate of domestic violence offences per 1,000 of 16+ population in north London, 2012/13



Islington has the second highest rate of reported domestic violence offences in north London.

This can be an indication of higher violence and/or of greater confidence in reporting to the police.

Number of domestic violence incidents and offences in Islington 2010/11 - 2012/13



Domestic violence incidents peaked during the months of April, July and December.

This is consistent with national figures which show domestic violence often increases at Christmas and during holidays.

What do we know about victims and perpetrators?

Domestic violence is a gendered crime, primarily perpetrated by men against women. However men can also be victims, women can be perpetrators, and violence exists within same sex relationships as well as between siblings and other family members.

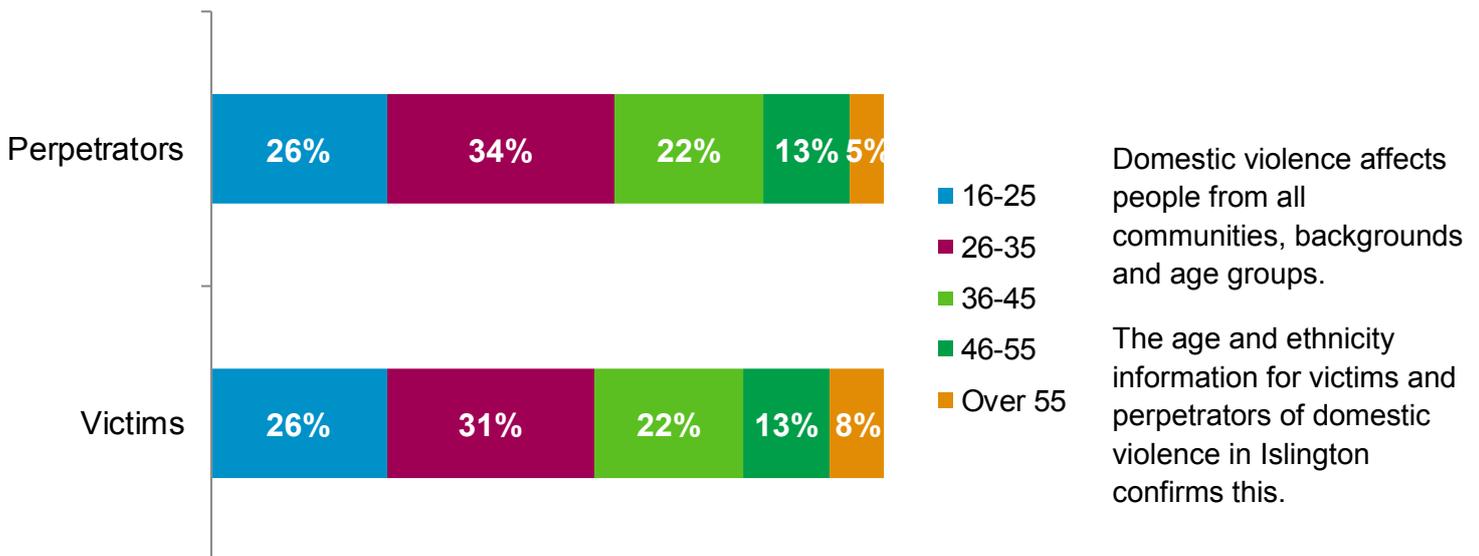
79%

of domestic violence victims in Islington are female.
2012/13

85%

of domestic violence perpetrators in Islington are male.
2012/13

Age of domestic violence offence victims and perpetrators in Islington, 2012/13



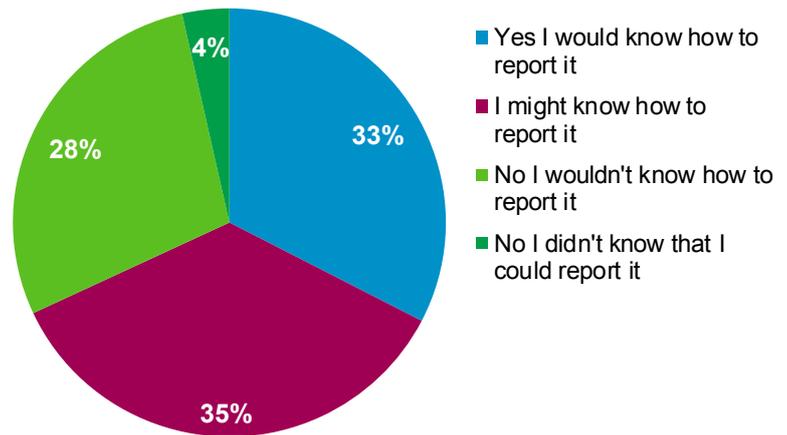
Ethnicity of domestic violence offence victims and perpetrators in Islington, 2012/13*



*Police data is based on self-defined ethnicity. It is not possible to compare this data with population data for the borough due to the different categories used in the census.

WHAT DO LOCAL PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THE ISSUE?

- In 2012 members of the Islington Citizens Panel were asked 'If you witnessed or experienced domestic violence would you know how to report it?'
- The results show that only 33% of residents confidently answered that they would know how to report it and, worryingly, 4% of respondents said they didn't know they could report it.



- This illustrates that domestic violence is a hidden crime, and many victims don't report it, for a range of reasons. Islington Council is committed to encouraging victims to recognise their abuse and seek help.

WHAT WORKS

- **Coordinated Community Response Model (CCRM).** The only way to reduce domestic violence is through multiple agencies working together. It is not just for the criminal justice system to respond to domestic violence; schools, health services, children's services, faith groups, voluntary sector organisations and the wider community of family, friends and work colleagues all have a role to play.
- **Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs).** IDVAs are a primary point of contact for high risk victims of domestic violence. They create a safety plan for victims which will include short and long term interventions to improve safety. MARACs are multi-agency meetings where the cases of high risk victims are discussed and all agencies share information and come up with a plan to reduce risk and increase safety.
- **Early Identification.** One of the most effective ways to help those experiencing domestic violence is to identify them as early as possible and refer them for support. Domestic violence often recurs and the level of violence escalates so identifying victims early can protect them from more serious harm. Routine enquiry in health services have been shown to improve early identification and referral.
- **Perpetrator programmes.** As well as supporting victims there is also increasing support available for perpetrators who wish to change their behaviour. A number of organisations provide structured therapeutic programmes. There is evidence that these programmes can work well in changing behaviour and reducing abuse, where perpetrators are motivated to change.

FUTURE NEED/RISK

There was a 23% increase in reported domestic violence offences in 2012/13 compared with the previous financial year. There are a number of factors that we anticipate may contribute to increases in future need:

Welfare Reform

The benefit cap may make victims more likely to stay with their abuser if they can't afford to move. Universal credit will be paid to one partner which may increase a victim's financial reliance on their abuser.

Unemployment and recession

Economic recession and high levels of unemployment may increase financial stress in relationships.

Victims may feel unable to leave a partner on whom they are financially reliant.

Changes to legal aid

More victims may stay with the perpetrator because legal aid will not be routinely available in separation, divorce and child contact cases, or for non-British victims not on a spousal visa.

TARGETS & OUTCOMES

Islington has a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy which sets our targets for reducing the impact of VAWG on men, women and children in Islington. The Strategy has three strands:

Prevention

Raising awareness with the general public to change attitudes and reduce tolerance of violence against women and girls.

Educating children and young people to safeguard them from the impacts of violence and to give them positive messages around sex and relationships.

Early identification and intervention with potential victims and perpetrators to prevent violence from occurring.

Provision

Appropriate and responsive to the needs of the community.

Delivered by sensitive, well trained officers across all Islington agencies.

Delivered in partnership by agencies that share information efficiently and safely about individuals.

Well supported and monitored by the Partnership and other funders and inspired by good practice from other areas.

Protection

Perpetrators are apprehended and held to account for their actions.

Victims are supported and protected to give them the strength to report crimes and pursue criminal convictions.

Information is shared across the Partnership to help identify and manage perpetrators, reducing risk to victims and supporting perpetrators to change their behaviour.

NATIONAL & LOCAL STRATEGIES

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Call to end violence against women and girls, 2010

Outlines the Government's approach to ending VAWG. It focuses on prevention, provision, partnership working, risk reduction and justice outcomes.

Mayoral Strategy on Violence Against Women and Girls 2013-17

Outlines the Mayor of London's approach to ending VAWG. Focuses on improving access to support, services for victims, addressing all consequences of violence and being tougher with perpetrators.

Working together to safeguard children, 2013

This document sets out the expectations on services to safeguard children. It recognises domestic violence as a key child safeguarding concern.

LOCAL STRATEGIES

Violence against women and girls strategy, 2011

This strategy sets the priorities for working to reduce the impact of violence against women and girls on Islington residents until 2015.

Towards a Fairer Islington: Corporate Plan, 2011

Tackling crime and antisocial behaviour and supporting victims of crime, including domestic violence, is a key objective of the Council's Corporate Plan to 2015.

Islington Adult Joint Commissioning Strategy, 2012

This strategy outlines how the Council and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) will develop services for vulnerable and disabled adults. The strategy recognises the links between domestic violence and substance misuse and acknowledges domestic violence as a vulnerability in terms of housing support.

WHAT IS BEING DONE LOCALLY TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE?

Islington Council's Community Safety team coordinates the overall response to domestic violence and all forms of violence against women and girls through developing strategies to tackle different forms of VAWG, raising awareness, commissioning services, training staff in the statutory and voluntary sectors, coordinating the local MARAC and Domestic Violence Persistent Perpetrators Panel (DVPPP). Locally there are a number of projects and services that work to support those affected by domestic violence and all forms of VAWG.

Universal Services in Islington

All public services, from health and social care to housing and the police, have a role to play in responding to domestic violence. Staff receive training on domestic violence and support from specialist services. In addition there are a number of services in Islington that have dedicated workers or projects on domestic violence.

- Children's Services have a dedicated worker in education for doing domestic violence prevention work in schools with pupils, teachers and parents.
- Islington has a scheme called Home Shelter which supports survivors by offering additional security measures on their homes such as solid doors, extra locks and grills. Islington's housing department are also signed up to a North London reciprocal agreement which supports survivors to move borough.

Specialist Services in Islington

Advocacy and Support Service (Solace Women's Aid)

- For women and men in Islington who are experiencing/have experienced domestic or sexual violence.
- Provides risk assessment, safety planning and support to all survivors aged 16 years and over.

North London Rape Crisis (Solace Women's Aid)

- Works with women who have experienced any form of sexual violence at any time in their life.
- Free, confidential and available to women over the age of 14 who live, work or study in Islington, Camden, Westminster, Haringey, Kensington and Chelsea, Barnet and Enfield.

Samira Outreach Project (Imece Women's Centre and Latin American Women's Aid)

- Provides advice, information and support to women from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee backgrounds in Islington who are experiencing any form of violence.

Activ*8 Complex Needs Project (Pilion Trust)

- Supports women with complex needs including domestic violence, substance misuse, mental health issues, etc. to access services, enabling them to feel safe and secure, while improving their quality of life.

Refuge services (Solace Women's Aid and Latin American Women's Aid)

- Islington has a number of refuges supporting women who need emergency accommodation to help them escape violence. These services support women with all their needs while in refuge.

Other specialist services based in Islington

- Manor Gardens Health Advocacy Service provides education, training and awareness on female genital mutilation as well as one to one support for survivors.
- Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation supports women from Kurdish and Middle Eastern backgrounds suffering any form of violence against women.
- Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation supports victims of domestic violence, forced marriage, honour based violence and female genital mutilation from the Middle East and Afghanistan.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on this topic can be found at the following locations:

- [Home Office Violence Against Women and Girls pages](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-the-uk) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-the-uk>
- [Coordinated Community Response website](http://www.ccrm.org.uk/) - <http://www.ccrm.org.uk/>
- [Islington Council Violence Against Women and Girls pages](http://www.islington.gov.uk/vawg) - www.islington.gov.uk/vawg
- [On Independent Domestic Violence Advocates \(IDVAs\) and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences \(MARACs\) the Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse \(CAADA\) website](http://www.caada.org.uk/marac/Information_about_MARACs.html) - http://www.caada.org.uk/marac/Information_about_MARACs.html
- [National Women's Aid](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/) - <http://www.womensaid.org.uk/>
- [London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime \(MOPAC\) VAWG pages](http://www.london.gov.uk/) - <http://www.london.gov.uk/>

About the Evidence Hub

The Evidence Hub is a partnership between the local NHS and Islington Council that brings together information held across different organisations into one accessible place. It provides access to evidence, intelligence and data on the current and anticipated needs of the Islington population and is designed to be used by a broad range of audiences including practitioners, researchers, commissioners, policy makers, Councillors, students and the general public.

This profile has been produced by Katie Furniss, Violence Against Women and Girls Project Officer and signed off by Alva Bailey, Head of Service, Community Safety.