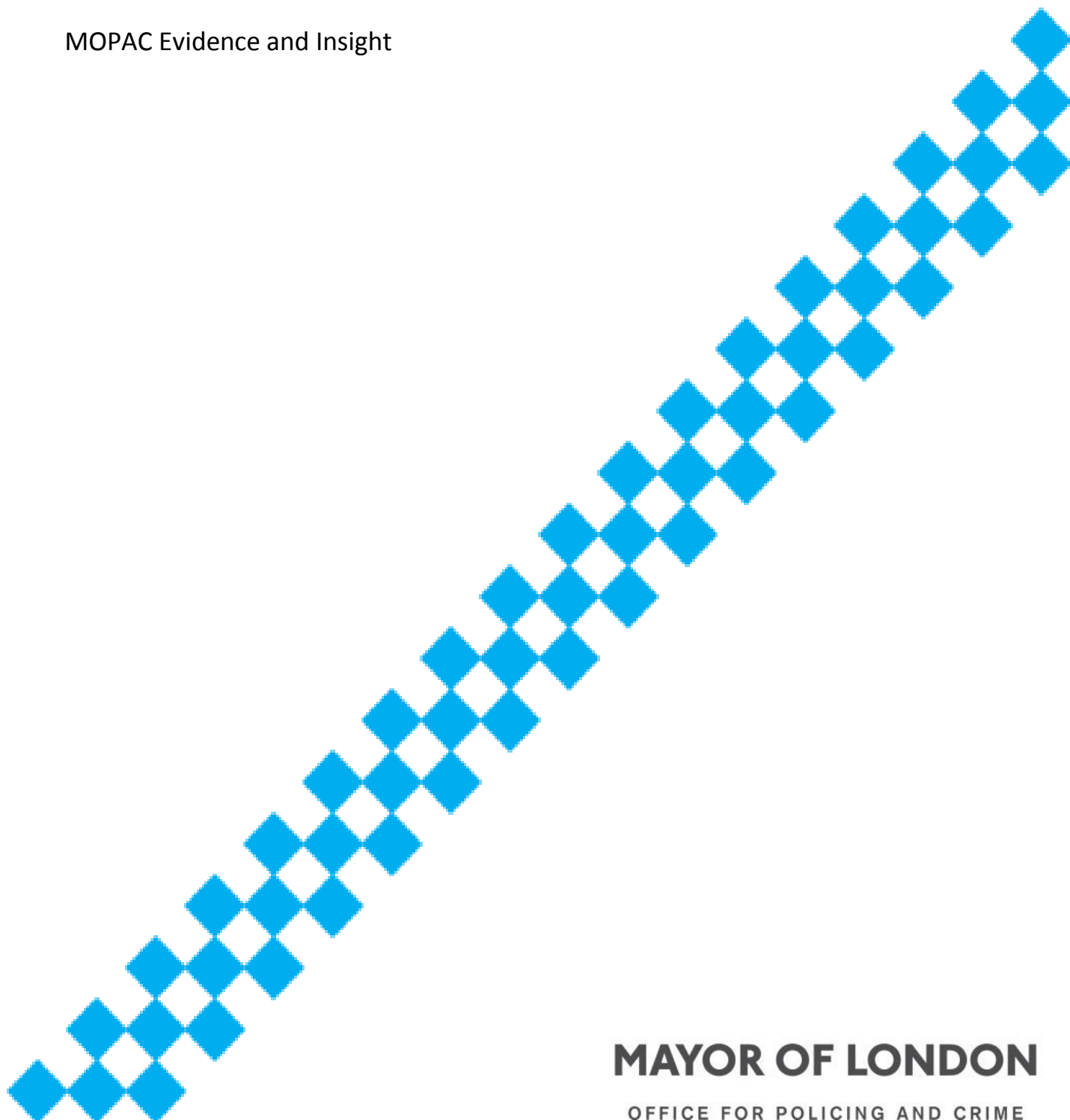


Beneath the Numbers

An exploration of the increases of recorded Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences

MOPAC Evidence and Insight



MAYOR OF LONDON

OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

Executive Summary

Both domestic abuse and sexual offending represent substantial volumes of recorded crime and demands on the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and one that has been increasing over recent years. Within the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan¹ 2017-2021, a specific commitment was made in relation to understanding the increases seen in these recorded crimes.

Analysis was conducted across a range of data sources. To explore what is beneath the recorded numbers, we have gathered information from a variety of sources – but we have primarily utilised Metropolitan Police Service recorded crime data and Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data published by Office for National Statistics (ONS) to drive our insights. Our main findings indicate:

Has there been an increase in these crimes?

- The two primary data sources related to domestic abuse and sexual offences contradict each other in terms of any potential increase. Police recorded offences have significantly increased over time, whilst prevalence as measured by CSEW shows little change
- Levels of recorded Domestic abuse and sexual offences across Police Forces in England and Wales has increased in recent years
- Prevalence estimates using London level CSEW data indicates that the number of recorded crimes is well below the potential number of victims per year
- Wards which are more vulnerable to community stability issues, as per the Vulnerable Localities Profile, experience higher levels of recorded domestic abuse than less vulnerable areas
- There are no statistical correlations between population density and volumes of offending for either sexual offending or domestic abuse across the capital
- Following the publication of HMICFRS Crime Data Integrity reports in 2014, there was an increase in the levels of recorded violence and sexual offences – two areas that were found to have been previously under-recorded by police across England and Wales

Are these increases due to better police recording?

- Following the launch of Operation Yewtree there was a slight increase in overall recorded sexual offences

¹ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mopac_police_and_crime_plan_2017-2021.pdf

- However, there was a clear increase in the number of historic sexual offences coming to the attention of the police following the launch of Operation Yewtree with historic offences recorded by police have increased by 134% over five years
- The addition of previously non-notifiable offences such as malicious communications has had a clear impact on recorded domestic abuse
- There has been a reduction in the level of 'no-criming' of rape offences and a slight increase for other sexual offences with the impact of 'no-criming' deemed to be negligible
- Younger adult victims appear under-represented in the police data when compared to CSEW estimates
- According to CSEW estimates, 1 in 8 single adult women living with children were victims of domestic abuse in the preceding 12 months to the survey compared with 6.4% of those living in a household with no children
- For sexual assaults, women who were separated or divorced (7.7%) were the most likely to be victims
- There are clear indications that vulnerabilities such as long-term illness or disability and low-income impact on the likelihood of victimisation

Is there evidence that victims are more willing to come forward to the police?

- Based on the most reliable information from the CSEW, there is no compelling evidence of an increase in victim confidence to report
- For domestic abuse and sexual offences, the level of response to CSEW that indicates that people have told police remains consistent over time, with a slight reduction in the case of domestic abuse in the most recent results
- Reasons for not reporting are complex and often linked to the seriousness of the offence or the relationship with the offender

This report is the culmination of an analytic exercise exploring the increases in police recorded crime for both domestic abuse and sexual offences. Whilst it is not possible to infer causality, the weight of evidence provided by the premises we have highlighted allows us to infer that increases in recorded crime can be primarily attributed to increased compliance with crime data integrity.

It is hoped that this analysis and research can drive further insights into the evidence base and inform decision making across London.

Introduction

The Mayor's Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021 (PCP) brought with it a specific focus on the victims of recorded crime – and more so those who are most vulnerable.

Within the PCP both *domestic abuse* and *sexual offences* were the focus of considerable attention, with an additional focus on these crimes also being bolstered by the publication of the Mayor's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2018-2021.

"(MOPAC will) commission specific work to look beneath reported crime statistics for rape and sexual and domestic violence and abuse so that we can say with much greater certainty what changes in figures mean"

That is - can we explore these increases in recorded crime and seek to understand what is driving them. This essentially boils down to three questions. Has there been an increase in these crimes occurring? Are these increases due to better police recording? Is there evidence that victims are more willing to come forward to the police? This report explores each of these.

Methodology

The cross-government definition describes domestic abuse as *any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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.*

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- **psychological**
- **physical**
- **sexual**
- **financial**
- **emotional**

This definition was updated to include coercive behaviour (December 2015) and the recognition that victims of this type of abuse may be aged under 18. Therefore, from April 2013 the way these offences are recorded includes victims aged 16 and above².

Sexual offences, as recorded by police, covers a range of different crime types. These range in severity from non-consensual crimes such as rape or sexual assault involving physical contact, crimes specifically against children including sexual abuse or grooming, and crimes that exploit others. The offences are broadly recorded into two groups:

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

- **Rape** – “A person ‘A’ commits an offence if (a) he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person ‘B’ with his penis, (b) ‘B’ does not consent to the penetration, and (c) ‘A’ does not reasonably believe that ‘B’ consents.” The classifications of rape recorded by police vary dependent on the gender and age of the victim.
- **Other Sexual Offences** – This is a much broader crime grouping incorporating offences such as contact sexual assaults (various classifications based on age/gender), grooming, sexual activity with a child, child sexual exploitation, abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature, exposure and voyeurism.

We have gathered information from a variety of sources – but we have primarily utilised police recorded crime data and Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data published by Office for National Statistics (ONS) to drive our insights. These are the two primary sources of information related to crime available to us – with each adding to our understanding.

It is widely reported that information recorded and held by police can only provide a partial picture of the level of crime experienced by the public. This is particularly the case for domestic abuse and sexual offences where it is believed there is a high level of under-reporting to police. Police recorded crimes are also prone to changes in recording practice and legislation as well as the propensity of victims to come forward. Even with the understanding of the caveats of such data, it does allow us to glean valuable insights in relation to the demands these crimes have on police.

The Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) for recorded crime provides a national standard for the recording and counting of ‘notifiable’ offences recorded by police across England and Wales.

The vision of these rules is that all police forces have a consistent approach that delivers accurate statistics that can be trusted by the public and puts the needs of victims at the core. The purpose³ of the HOCR is:

- ensure that victims of crime receive the service they expect and deserve;
- prioritise effective investigation of crime in keeping with national standards and the College of Policing’s Code of Ethics;
- inform the public of the scale, scope and risk of crime in their local communities;
- allow Police and Crime Commissioners, Police Forces and local partners to build intelligence on crime and criminal behaviour necessary for an efficient and effective response;

³ Vision and Purpose Statements for Crime Recording (NCRS and HOCR) – Home Office
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/387762/count-vision-december-2014.pdf

- enable Government, PCCs, Forces and their partners to understand the extent of demands made on them and the associated costs of service delivery; and
- inform the development of Government policy to reduce crime and to establish whether those policies are effective.

The CSEW is a longstanding survey across many crime and justice topics covering approximately 32,000 individuals across England and Wales – although has a far smaller sample at the London level. Information on domestic abuse and sexual offences in CSEW is collected through self-completion modules on tablet computers and face to face interviews.

This source is hugely beneficial in covering and identifying crimes that are not reported to the police. The CSEW is a reliable source of estimated prevalence and the consistency in methodology remains unaffected by changes in recording practices, police activity or the propensity of victims to report such crimes to the police.

To complement the above data and provide richer insights further qualitative research was undertaken with representatives from organisations working with survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence in London. During August and September 2018 fifteen people were interviewed across several organisations. For the purposes of reporting, we have grouped these into the following categories:

- **IDVA:** Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) from Victim Support, working in a variety of functions/locations across London
- **Domestic/Sexual Violence Support Organisations:** Representatives from organisations supporting survivors domestic abuse and either historic or recent sexual abuse (RASASC, Into the Light, One in Four, Solace Women’s Aid)
- **Specialist Support Organisation:** Representatives from organisations that provide tailored support focused on survivors from specific demographic groups (IKROW, GALOP, MANKIND, RESPOND)

These organisations were identified following discussions with colleagues in the MOPAC Violence Against Women and Girls team, and efforts were made to approach organisations that provided support to a range of survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

However, it should be stressed that this was a small sample, comprising of those who agreed to participate in the research. Consequently, the themes and findings from these interviews are not presented as definitive conclusions but to add a more subjective view using these perceptions of service providers of domestic abuse and sexual offences in London.

Interviewees were asked a series questions⁴ about their perceptions of trends in the reporting and recording of domestic abuse and sexual violence offences. Themes included respondents’ perceptions of whether there had been any increase in the number of offences of domestic abuse and sexual violence overall, whether there had been an increase in people’s willingness

⁴ the full interview schedule is appended.

to report these offences, whether the respondents had witnessed any changes in the number of survivors accessing their organisation's services and, if so, why they believed this to be the case. They were also asked to identify the barriers that prevented someone who had experienced domestic abuse or sexual violence from reporting, and whether there were any specific groups of survivors who were less likely to seek help. We also asked for their perceptions of the response to domestic abuse and sexual offences provided by the police and other criminal justice agencies, and about any improvements they felt could be made to provide a better service to survivors.

Key questions for the report

To better understand what the changes in both police recorded domestic abuse and sexual offences mean, the following key areas were explored:

- 1. Has there been an increase in these crimes occurring?**
 - Who experiences these crimes? Have the demographics changed of victims changed?
 - Are there areas of London where there is potential under recording/reporting of these types of offence?

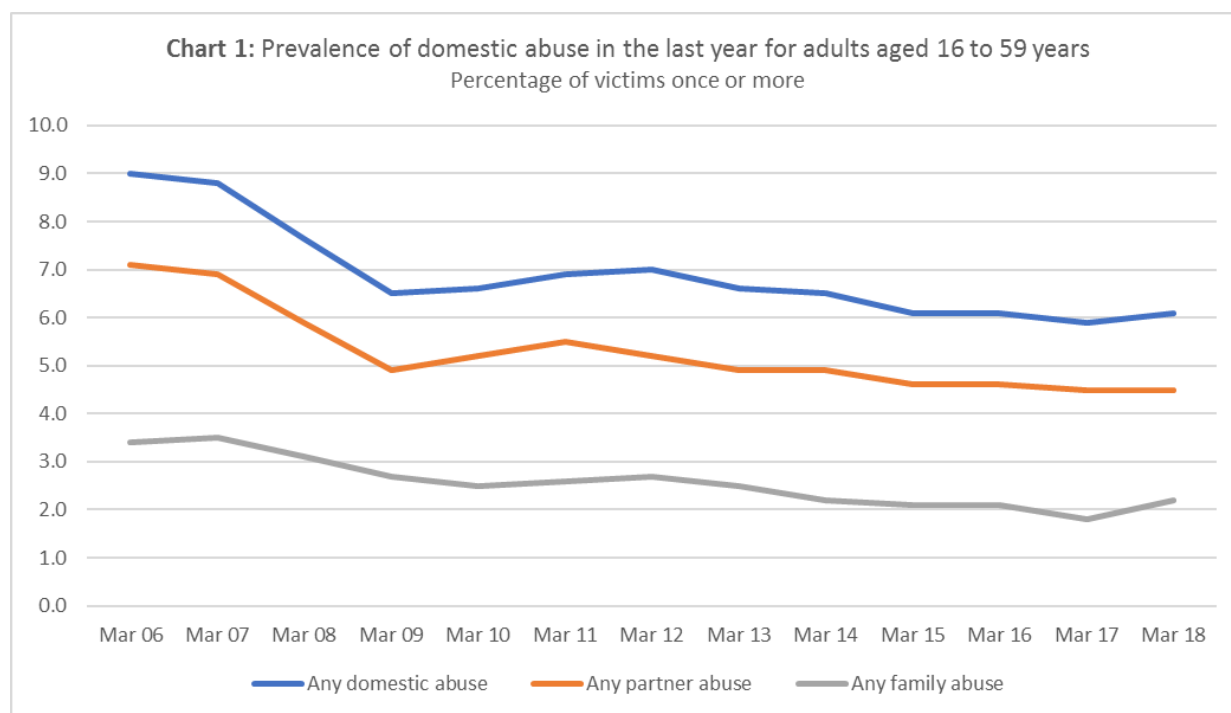
- 2. Are these increases due to better police recording?**
 - What impact has police activity or legislative change had on the recorded volume of offences?
 - What impact has reporting and recording of historic sexual offences had on the overall level of these crimes?

- 3. Is there evidence that victims are more willing to come forward to the police?**
 - Are victims more confident to come forward?
 - Has demand on survivor organisations increased?

Section 1: Has there been an increase in these crimes?

The data conundrum

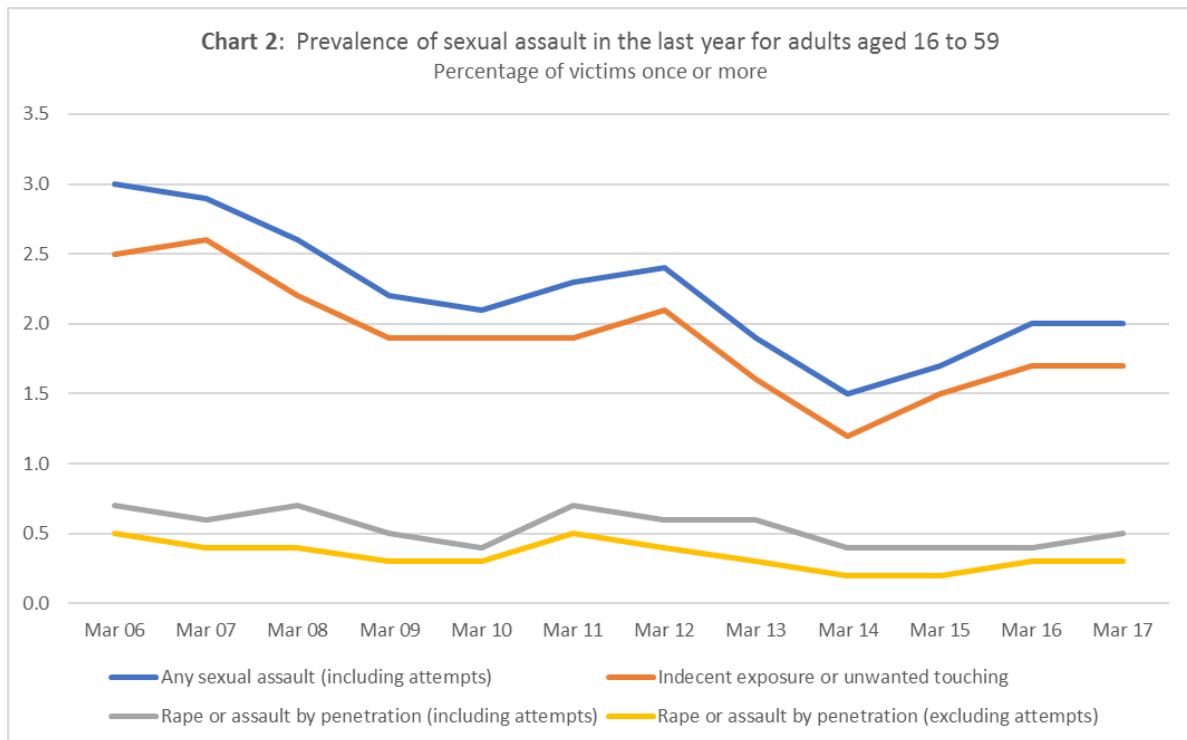
Immediately, upon starting this analysis, we encounter what we have termed the 'data conundrum' – essentially that the two primary data sources related to domestic abuse and sexual offences contradict each other.



In the year ending March 2018, the CSEW indicated that there had been little change over recent years in the prevalence of domestic abuse⁵ across England and Wales. (see Chart 1) The most recently available data of this type for sexual assaults across England and Wales⁶ is to end of twelve months to March 2017. The long-term results of respondents aged 16-59 who reported experiencing sexual assault in the year prior to survey shows a slight decline over time from 3% in the twelve months to March 2006 to 2% in the year ending March 2017 (see Chart 2). The estimated prevalence of rape has remained consistent over the last twelve years.

⁵ Source: ONS Year ending March 2006 to year ending March 2018 Crime Survey for England and Wales - No data point is available for the year ending March 2008 because comparable questions on stalking, an offence that makes up the domestic abuse category, were not included in that year.

⁶ Source: ONS Year ending March 2006 to year ending March 2017 Crime Survey for England and Wales - The sample size is lower for the years ending March 2011 to March 2013 than for other years due to use of a split-sample experiment in these years. New questions were introduced into the survey from the year ending March 2013 and estimates from this year onwards are calculated using these new questions. Estimates for earlier years are calculated from the original questions with an adjustment applied to make them comparable to the new questions



This stands in stark contradiction to police recorded crime data. In terms of domestic abuse, incidents are defined as reports where, after initial investigation, no crime notifiable to the Home Office was committed. Notifiable offences are those that after investigation a crime has been committed.

The ONS Domestic Abuse Data Tool⁷ provides incident and offence volumes across England and Wales between the years to March 2016 and March 2018.

The data in this release shows that in the year to March 2018, the volume of domestic abuse offences recorded by police in England and Wales increased by 23% compared to year to March 2017. For the MPS area the increase in the year to March 2018 was lower than the national figure - with an increase of 5% on the preceding year.

For sexual offences recorded by police, the ONS release to end of March 2017 showed that at that point there were a total of 121,187 sexual offences recorded by the police in England and Wales in that year. This was an increase of 14% compared to the preceding year and was at the highest level recorded since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standards were introduced in 2002. In the year to March 2018, this had increased across England and Wales to 150,732 – an increase on the twelve months to March 2017 of 24%. This compares to an increase across the MPS area of 12% in the same period⁸.

⁷

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesdatatool>

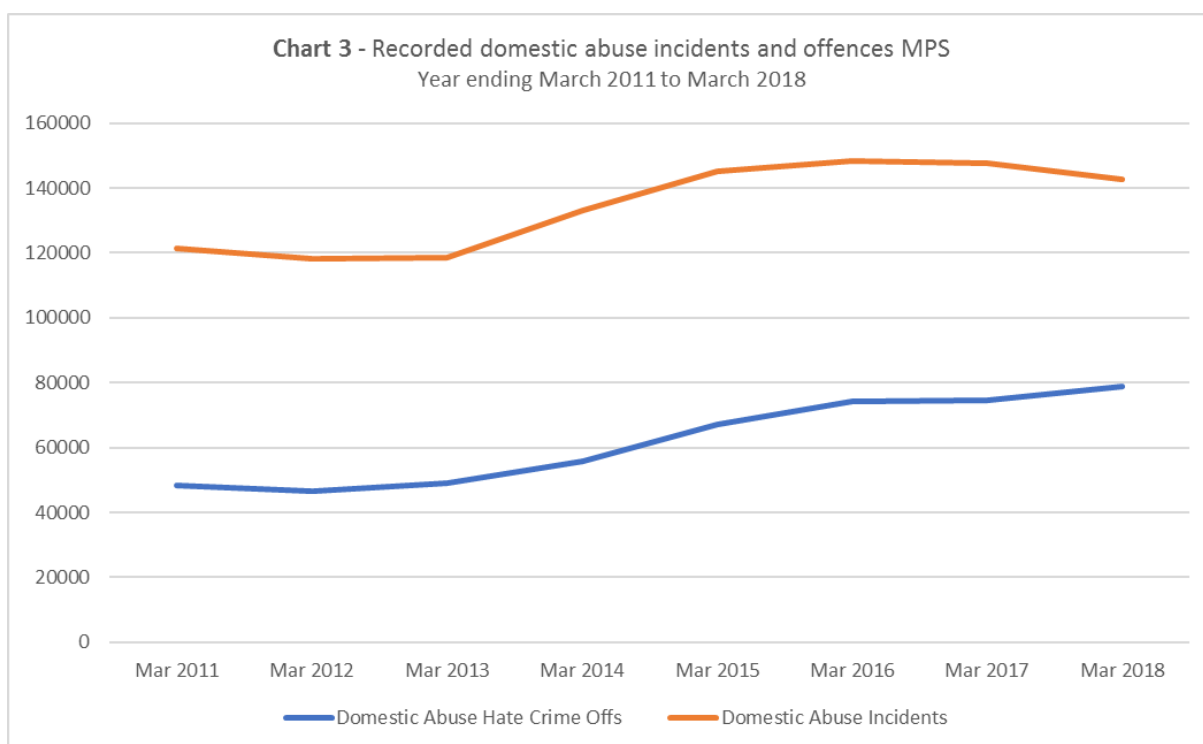
⁸

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>

By using the available MPS data over a longer period, between year ending March 2011 and March 2018 inclusive, we can see that recorded domestic abuse and sexual offences remained constant until twelve months to March 2014 at which point sharp increases in both were apparent (Domestic abuse offences showed a 20% increase at end of year to March 2016 compared to previous year, and total sexual offences +32%). Since this date increases have been less pronounced, although still on an upwards trend.

Looking at domestic abuse incidents recorded by the MPS, these increased by 17% in the year ending March 2018 compared to the year ending March 2011. However, in the latest twelve months, the number of these recorded incidents marginally decreased compared to the preceding year - a reduction of 3% compared to year ending March 2017 (see Chart 3).

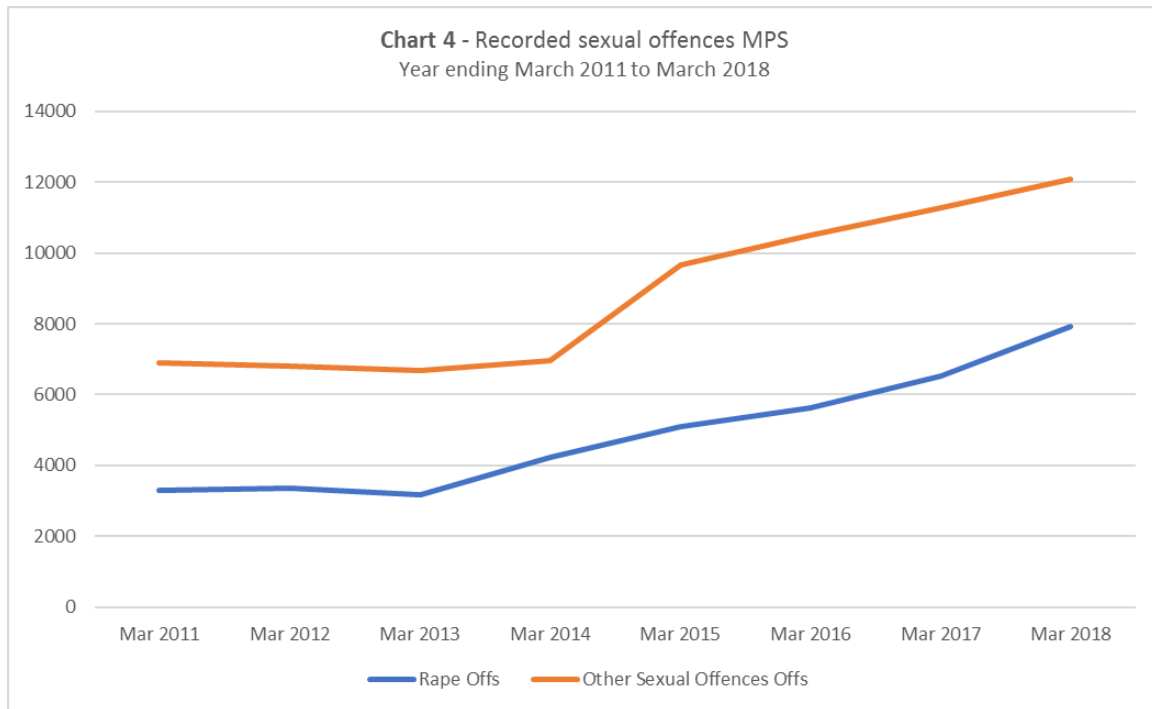
For domestic abuse recorded notifiable offences, these have increased at a much higher rate than that seen for incidents. As at the year ending March 2018, total recorded offences were 63% higher than the level recorded in the year ending March 2011. Further, at the end of the last twelve months there was an increase of 5% recorded compared to the year ending March 2017.



For sexual offences recorded by police, there is a clear upward trend for both recorded rape offences and other sexual offences over the long term. At the end of the twelve months to March 2018, the recorded total sexual offences recorded by the MPS was 96% higher than at the same point to March 2011 and 12% when compared to the period to March 2017.

Rape offences record by the MPS in the twelve months to March 2018 were 140% higher than those recorded in the period to March 2011 (equivalent to over 4,600 more recorded offences) and 21% higher than the twelve months to March 2017. Regarding other sexual offences, the increase in recorded crime was 75% higher than that recorded in the twelve months to March 2011 and 7% higher than the period to March 2017. (see Chart 4). ONS

releases have also previously indicated that sexual offences recorded by police across England and Wales started to increase⁹ from 2012/13.

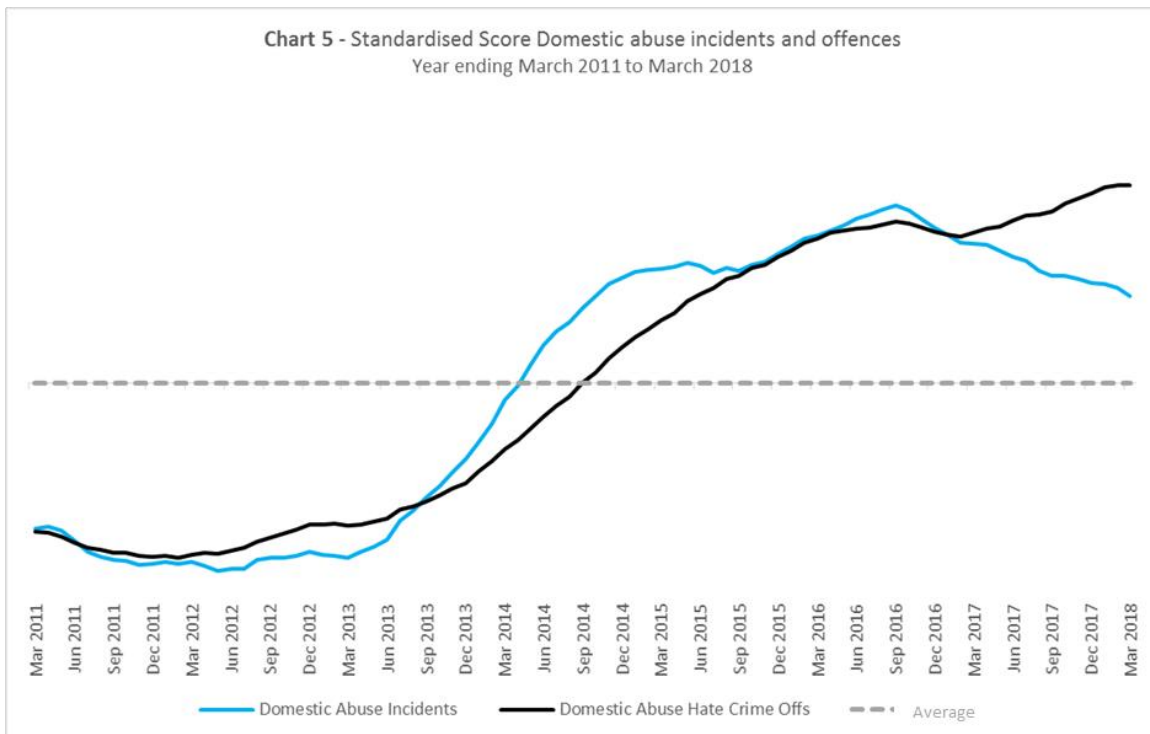


By standardising the long-term data, it is possible to compare the domestic abuse incident and recorded offence trends together. Using a standard score (z-score¹⁰) we can explore how many standard deviations from the mean a value is (see Chart 5).

⁹

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/sexualoffencesinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2017#sexual-offences-recorded-by-the-police>

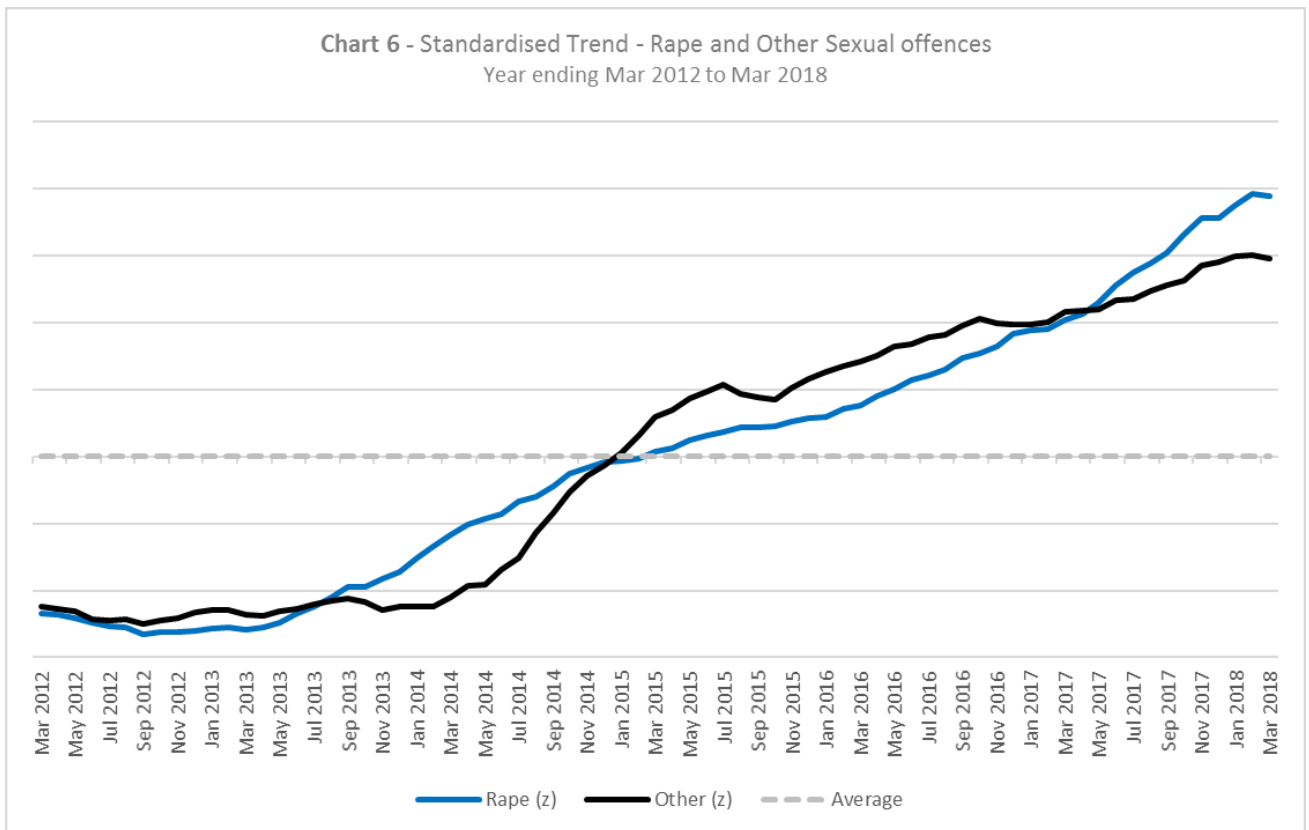
¹⁰ The Z score is the number of standard deviations from the mean any given data point is.



Using this method further illustrates the rising trends for both series – the continued upward trajectory over the last eight rolling twelve-month periods for recorded offences in comparison to the reducing trend over the same period for incidents.

We have found that the long-term trends at the rolling twelve-month level for both incidents and offences are statistically significant. In the case of domestic abuse incidents, the trend has been above the twelve-month average since mid-2014, whilst for domestic offences the above average trend is apparent from late-2014.

There has also been a clear upward trend in both rape and other sexual offences recorded by the MPS (see chart 6). Using the same method as described above, the key point when recorded offence volumes started to increase was during 2014, with levels since early 2015 exceeding the long-term average. In recent twelve-month periods it is also clear that the trend for recorded Other Sexual offences has slowed, whereas the recorded levels of rape offences continued to increase on a rolling twelve month-basis.



Estimated prevalence of domestic abuse and sexual assault in London

ONS have published London level data from CSEW on both domestic abuse and sexual assault. To increase base sizes, the sample for analysis covered the years ending March 2016 to March 2018 inclusive¹¹. The estimates are based on the self-completion module on domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking, which is restricted to adults aged 16 to 59 years living in households in London¹².

Using the Mid-Year 2017 population estimate¹³ for London and the London level CSEW results, we can estimate that approximately 246,700 adults aged 16 to 59 years who live in London experienced any form of domestic abuse in the year prior to completing the survey. This equates to a prevalence rate of approximately 4 in 100 adults between these ages. Women were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse than men (5.9% compared with 2.9%). This equates to an estimated ~164,000 women and ~82,000 men.

¹¹ Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/adhocs/008805crimesurveyenglandanddwalesestimatesofsexualassaultanddomesticabuseexperiencedbyadultsaged16to59>

¹² The upper age limit for completing the self-completion module was increased to 74 from April 2017, but to ensure all data included in this analysis are comparable, only 16 to 59-year olds are included

¹³

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland>

Further to this, and by using the same methodology we can estimate that 168,000 adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced specifically partner abuse¹⁴ in the year prior to survey, equating to a prevalence rate of 3 in 100 adults. Women, as seen with overall domestic abuse, are more likely to have experienced partner abuse than men (4.5% compared to 1.5%). This equates to an estimated ~125,000 women and ~42,000 men who had experienced partner abuse.

For sexual assault, we can estimate that 151,000 adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced any form of sexual assault (including attempts) in the year prior to completing the survey, which is a prevalence rate of approximately 3 in 100 adults. Women were more likely to have experienced sexual assault than men (4.1% compared with 1.3%). This equates to an estimated ~114,000 female victims and ~37,000 male victims.

Women were more likely to have experienced indecent exposure or unwanted touching in the year prior to survey (3.6% compared to 1.2% of men). This means that an estimated ~100,000 women and ~28,000 men had experienced indecent exposure or unwanted touching.

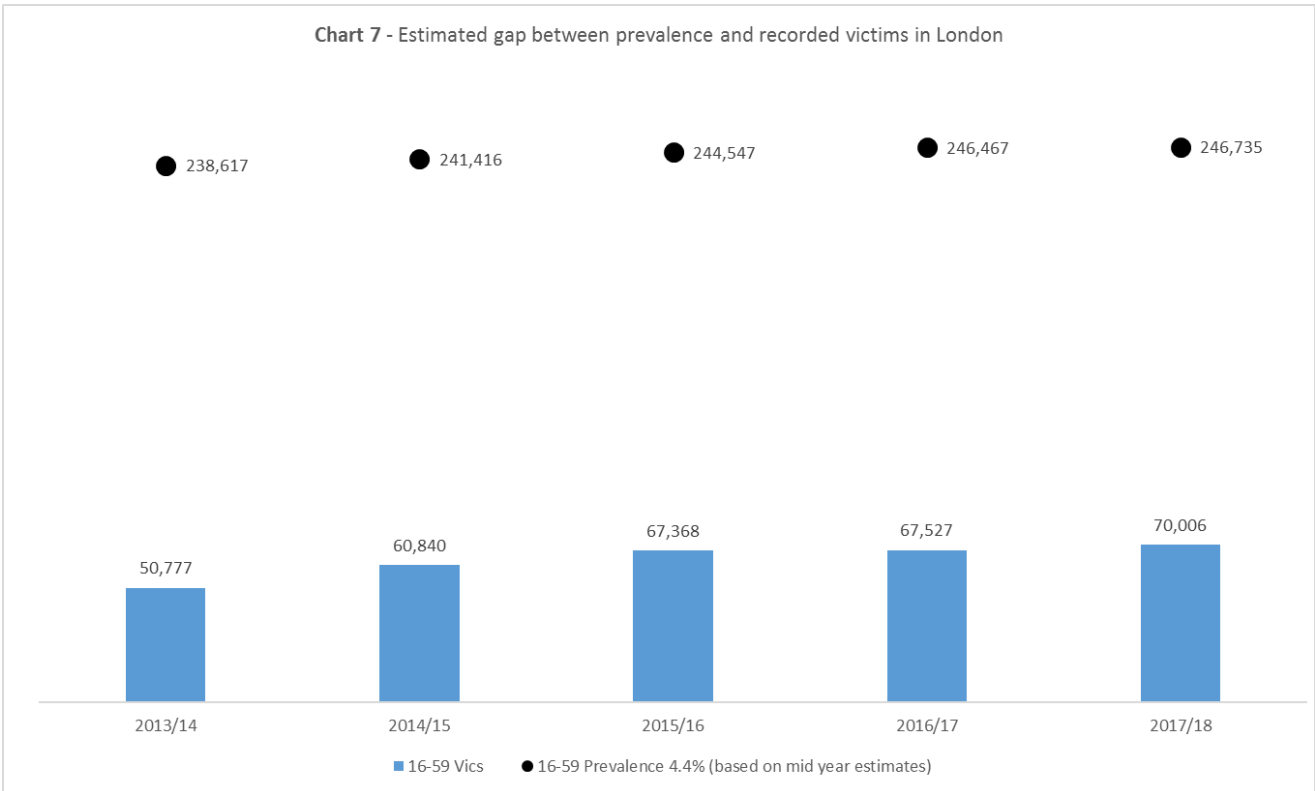
The percentage of women and men that had experienced rape or assault by penetration in the preceding year were much smaller (1% of women and 0.1% of men). This means an estimated ~30,600 adults had experienced these offences in the year prior to the interview – ~27,800 women and ~2,800 men. We can use these estimates to illustrate the differences between this estimated prevalence and police recorded crime.

By using the estimate of prevalence for the population of London aged between 16 and 59 years that experienced any form of domestic abuse in the year prior to survey (4 in 100); applying this to the estimated mid-year population for this cohort across the last five financial years and comparing to the recorded victims of domestic abuse¹⁵ by police we can hypothesise the gap between the number recorded by the police and the number of victims that may have experienced this type of crime as inferred by the responses to CSEW (see Chart 7). This echoes what we know about under-reporting of these incidents.

¹⁴ non-physical abuse, threats, force, sexual assault or stalking committed by their partner

¹⁵ Data only from 2013/14 as this is the point that the definition of DA was extended to include 16 and 17 year olds

Chart 7 - Estimated gap between prevalence and recorded victims in London



Has there been any change in where these recorded crimes occur?

We know from previous analysis that by mapping the volume of offences across the 32 boroughs of London that this does not necessarily indicate the impact of offending on the population. The mid-year population estimate by ONS¹⁶ for 2016 shows a rounded figure of 8.7m residents living in the jurisdiction of the MPS.

Across London boroughs there is wide variation in population levels – Barnet has a population of ~386,100 people compared to less than half of that number in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (~156,700).

Domestic abuse across the capital

In the twelve months to March 2018, there were 9.0 Domestic Abuse Offences per 1,000 population across the 32 boroughs¹⁷. Although Croydon and Newham boroughs recorded the highest volume of recorded offending for domestic abuse, their rate of offending per 1,000 population was lower than other boroughs such as Barking and Dagenham, Greenwich and Haringey.

¹⁶

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates#publicati-ns> – this has been used as this allowed ward level comparison

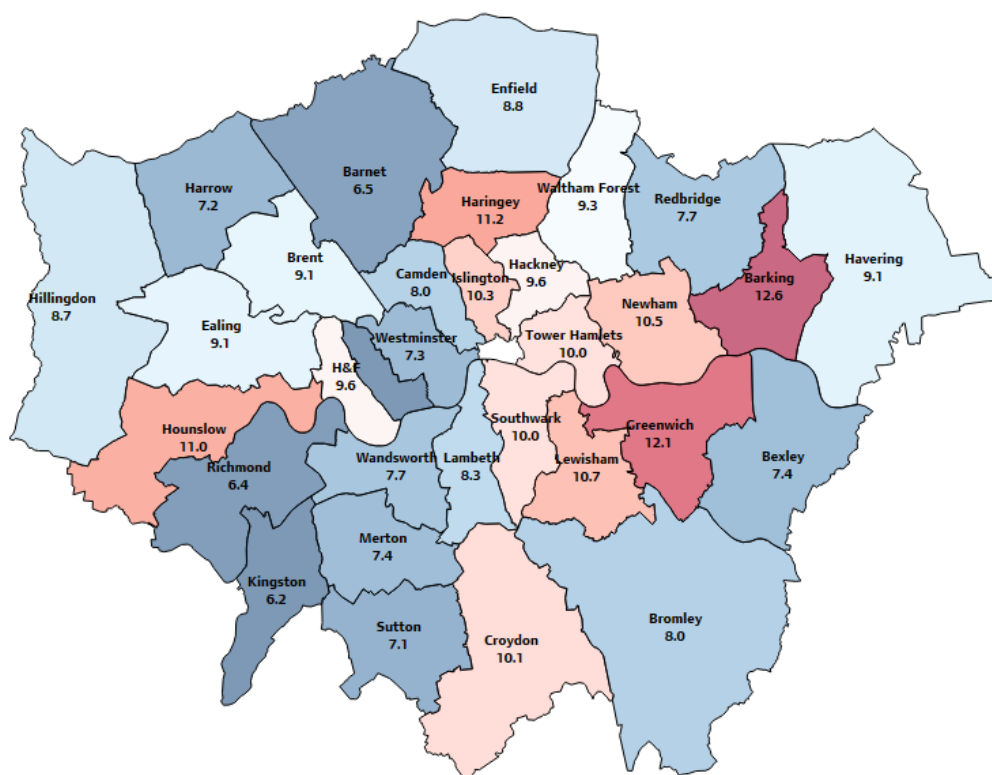
¹⁷ Population figures based on 2016 mid-year estimates

Barking and Dagenham recorded the highest rate of offending in the year to March 2018, a rate of 12.6 offences per 1,000 population. Kingston Upon Thames has the lowest volumes of offending as well as the lowest rate.

Since the twelve months to March 2016, Barking and Dagenham and Greenwich have had the highest rates of offending for Domestic Abuse in the MPS (see map 1)¹⁸. While Greenwich had seen variations in the rate on a year on year basis, Barking and Dagenham had a reduction in year to March 2017 compared to the previous year, however this has since returned to similar levels as seen previously.

Domestic Abuse Offences per 1,000 population

Map 1



When we explored the relationship between the volume of recorded domestic abuse and those electoral wards that are vulnerable to community stability issues (Vulnerable Localities Profile¹⁹) we found that wards with the highest volumes of recorded offending generally are those most vulnerable to these issues – that is to say that six in ten of the highest volume wards for recorded offences were in the ‘most vulnerable’ groupings²⁰.

Furthermore, for all offences recorded across the MPS, just under 30% happened in the most vulnerable wards compared to just 11% in the least vulnerable. Statistical analysis identified that across London, there was a strong correlation between the volume of offending and the

¹⁸ Both having rate of offending approximately 2 standard deviations from the mean

¹⁹ an index that incorporates different sets of data such as crime, deprivation, health, educational attainment and population density

²⁰ Offending at least 2 standard deviations from the mean and VLP 0-20%

level of vulnerability of wards. This correlation was also marginally stronger when vulnerability was compared to rate of offending per 1,000 population.

In short, we can therefore surmise that wards which are more vulnerable to community stability issues experience higher levels of recorded domestic abuse offending.²¹ We also tested if there was any relationship between population density in areas and the recorded offences – this found that there was generally no correlation between population density and offending levels.

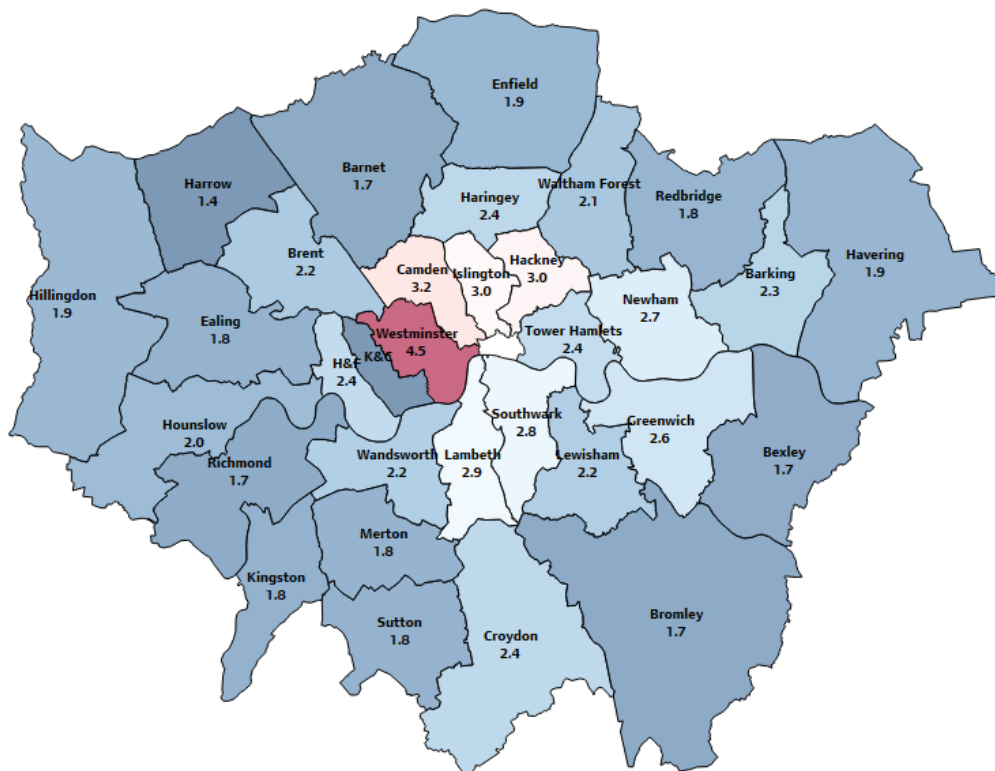
Sexual offending across the capital

Sexual offences recorded across the MPS in the twelve months to March 2018 was highest in Westminster, both in terms of volume and rate per 1,000 population (see Map 2). These findings are believed to be influenced by the high level of footfall in this borough (workday population and the night time economy) and the relatively low residential population. This is further supported by other inner London boroughs having a significantly higher rate of offending when compared to outer London boroughs.

The volume of sexual offences recorded by the MPS has a positive correlation with the population size and density of a borough. By attempting to minimise the effect of Westminster’s high volumes, the strength of this correlation increases when the borough is excluded from the calculation; this is true for both rape and other sexual offences.

Sexual Offences per 1,000 population

Map 2



²¹ Using Pearson’s Cor Test on rate of offending per 1,000 population: Df = 568; p-value < 0.05; cor = 0.74

Across the 32 boroughs we observed that in the twelve months to March 2018 Hammersmith & Fulham, Hounslow and Lewisham all had reductions in recorded sexual offences compared to the previous year; only Lewisham had a recorded a reduction in rape offences.

At the lower geographic level of electoral ward, the highest volume of recorded sexual offences occurred in areas within boroughs that have higher levels of footfall. Offences were highest in St. James's and West End in Westminster, as well as Stratford and New Town in Newham and Fairfield in Croydon. These areas are town centres, generally popular for socialising, attracting residents from surrounding areas, tourists and others from further afield. However, in areas such as these, where offending levels are high, rates per population is an inaccurate method of establishing a rate of offending as population at times of generally high offending will be significantly different to the residential population of the area. There is a very weak to no statistical correlation between population density and volumes of offending across recorded sexual offending.

Unlike the strong correlation seen with domestic abuse recorded by police, sexual offences recorded in the twelve months to March 2018 had a weak positive correlation to areas vulnerable to community stability issues.

Each year after the period to March 2015 the boroughs experiencing the largest increase in Rape Offences differ, however the boroughs with the highest number of offences remained the same; these are Croydon, Lambeth, Newham and Westminster.

In the twelve months to March 2018, Westminster recorded the highest volume of rape Offences, and the highest increase in volume from twelve months to March 2015. Boroughs such as Camden, Greenwich, Hackney and Islington also experienced significant increases in offending.

Section one - Key Findings

- The two primary data sources related to domestic abuse and sexual offences contradict each other. Police recorded offences have increased over time, whilst prevalence as measured by CSEW shows little change
- Prevalence estimates using London level CSEW data indicates that the number of recorded crimes is well below the potential number of victims per year
- Wards which are more vulnerable to community stability issues experience higher levels of recorded domestic abuse
- There are no statistical correlations between population density and volumes of offending for either sexual offending or domestic abuse across the capital

Section 2 Are increases due to better police recording?

Have improvements to police compliance with standards driven increases in police recorded crime?

So far, analysis indicates the disparity between the increasing Police recorded crime and the stable findings of the CSEW. It is possible to explore the increases within Metropolitan Police Service recorded offences in more detail. As can be seen in charts 8 & 9, two major milestones – the launch of 'Operation Yewtree' and an improvement in compliance with National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) - may have had an impact across both domestic abuse and sexual offences recorded by police.

In November 2014 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC)²² released a report of an inspection into crime data integrity in police forces across England and Wales²³. This report highlighted that, at that time, over 800,000 crimes reported to police go unrecorded each year – approximately one in five of all reported crimes. This was found particularly to affect victims of violence and sexual offences. For violence against the person (VAP) under-recording rates were assessed as to be as much as one third. This same report suggested that sexual offences were under-recorded by 26% across England and Wales.

Indeed, as at the end of the twelve-months to March 2015, following the publication of the inspection report by HMIC, domestic abuse offences across the MPS increased by 21% and Sexual Offences by 32% when compared to the same period to March 2014.

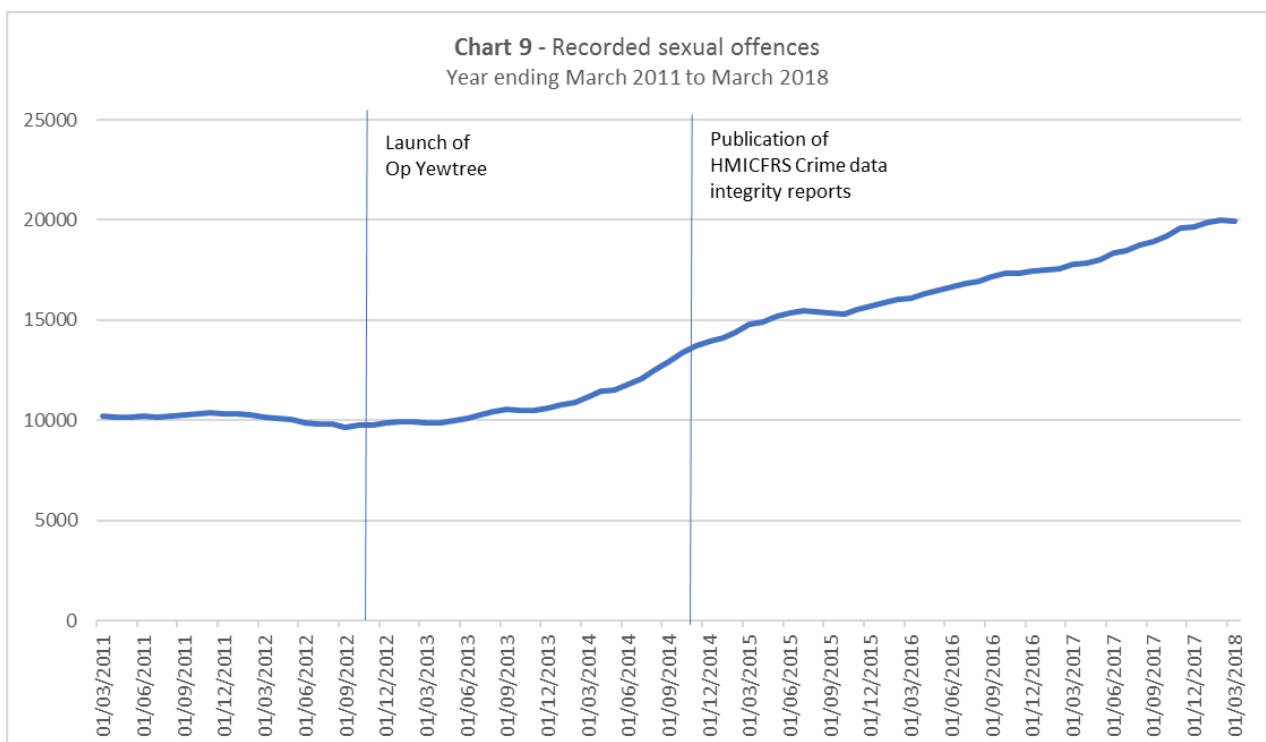
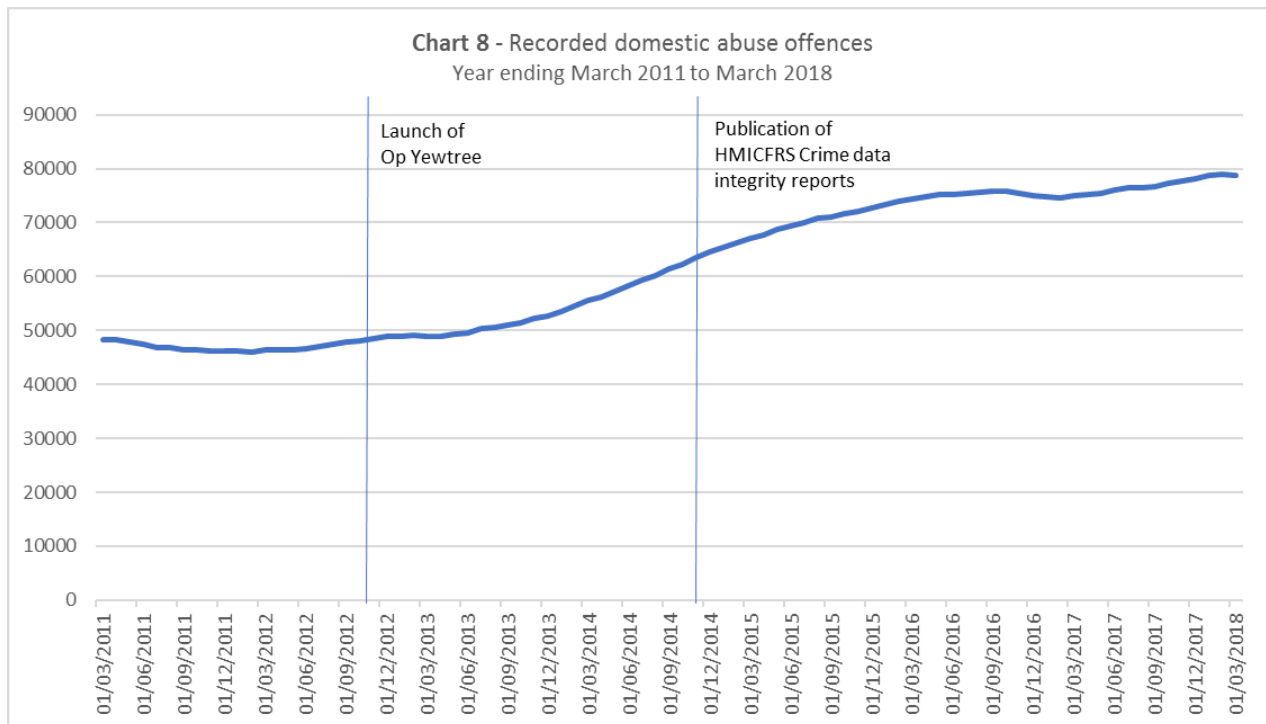
Follow up inspections by HMICFRS indicate that improvements have been made but varies force to force. It is therefore likely that any increases in relation to improved compliance with recording may continue for some time.

²² Now Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

²³ 'Crime-recording: making the victim count' © HMIC 2014 ISBN: 978-1-78246-660-

4<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/crime-recording-making-the-victim-count.pdf>

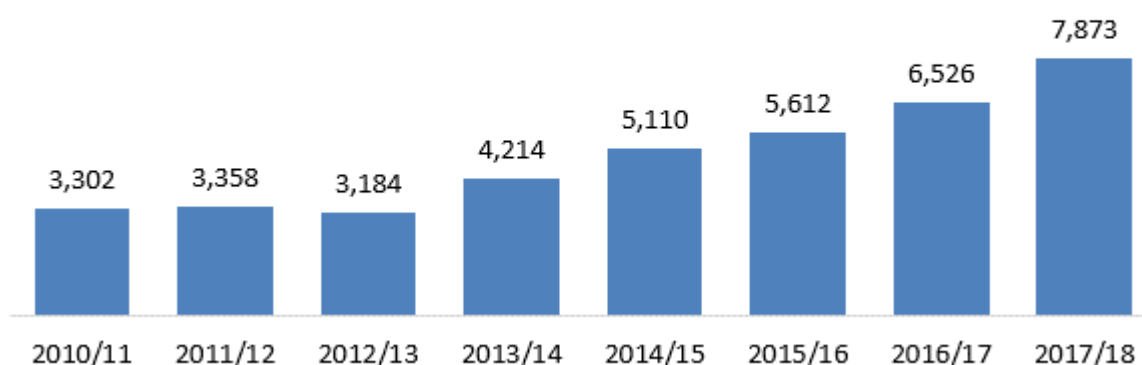
Following the launch of Operation Yewtree, the investigation into historic sexual offences, in October 2012 there was a period whereby sexual offence volume did not see immediate increases across the MPS. However, by end of the twelve months to March 2013 these offences had increased by 13% when compared to the preceding year.



Additionally, in respect of sexual offences, ONS published detailed information²⁴ on this topic in February 2018 which covered the period to end of March 2017. Within this publication, ONS stated that “high-profile coverage of sexual offences and the police response to reports of non-recent sexual offending is another factor that is likely to influence police recording of sexual offences. For example, Operation Yewtree, which began in 2012, and more recently, allegations by former footballers”. The report further states that this may influence victim’s willingness to come forward for both historic and more recent offences.

As seen earlier in this report, standardised trends of rape and other sexual offences recorded by the MPS show a similar trend. Both types of offence increased since 2014 - however the increase in rape offences appears to pre-date the HMICFRS report being published (see chart 10).

Chart 10 – Volume of recorded rape
Year ending March 2011 to March 2018



Rape offences have increased in volume since year to March 2013. Between then and the following period to March 2014 the volume of rape offences increased by almost a third; with the volume recorded in the period to March 2018 being almost two and a half times larger than that in the period to March 2013.

As indicated, improvements in recording practices were implemented following the HMICFRS reporting the year to March 2015 and volumes recorded in the following year were 21% higher. Overall, volumes recorded in 2017/18 were 54% higher than those in 2014/15.

It must also be recognised that the MPS Crime Data Integrity inspection 2018²⁵ conducted by HMICFRS ended with the service being judged as ‘Good’. The report stated that “the Metropolitan Police Service has made concerted efforts to improve crime-recording accuracy” and that the service has a “commitment to accurate crime recording that is victim-focused and free from performance pressures of any kind”. The MPS are now recording 87.6% of reported violence against the person accurately and 91% of reported sex offences.

²⁴ ONS Sexual Offences in England and Wales: year ending March 2017
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/sexualoffencesinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2017>

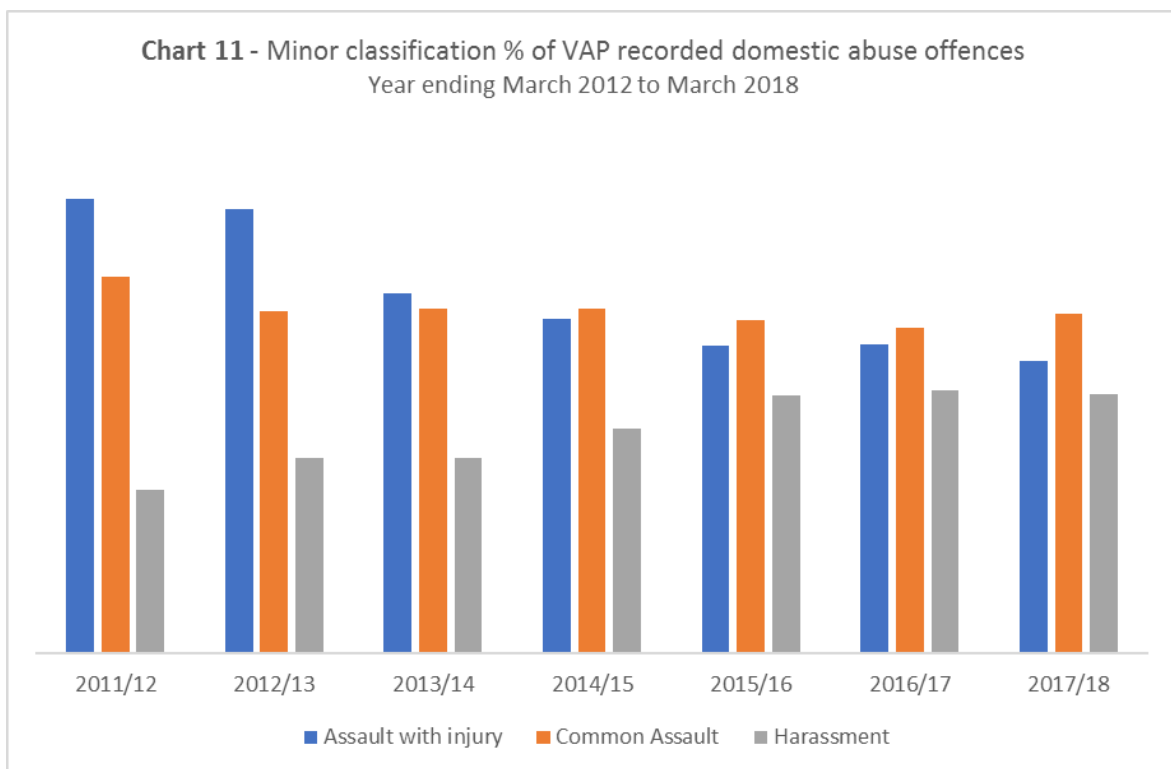
²⁵ <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/metropolitan-police-service-crime-data-integrity-inspection-2018/>

The impact on improved compliance on domestic abuse recorded by police

HMICFRS report of November 2014 highlighted that Violence Against the Person (VAP) was a classification of crime that was significantly under recorded by police across England and Wales. We know from the police recorded crime to end of March 2018, that total VAP recorded by the MPS was 24% higher than at the same point to March 2015.

The proportion of recorded domestic abuse offences identified as VAP accounted for 81% of the total recorded domestic abuse in year ending March 2018; this has remained consistent in each twelve-month period since year ending March 2012. Considering the impact that the increased compliance with recording has clearly had on overall VAP levels recorded by the MPS, it follows that this has also impacted on the recorded levels of domestic abuse VAP.

The impact of changes to the Home Office Counting Rules



We notice that although VAP accounted for most of the domestic abuse flagged offences over time, over the last eight twelve-month periods to end of March, the proportions that each minor classification contributes to domestic abuse VAP has shifted.

Chart 11 illustrates the clear increase in the proportion that is attributed to the Harassment minor classification. In year ending March 2012, this category accounted for just 16% of all domestic abuse VAP compared to 25% in year ending March 2018.

HOCA for recorded crime are constantly updated, whereby offences recorded by police that had previously been 'non-notifiable' become 'notifiable'. This essentially means that crimes

that were previously not 'counted' are subsequently included in the police recorded crime data sent by forces to the Home Office.

This is pertinent to the levels of recorded Harassment domestic abuse offences as several additional offences have been added as per HOCR in the past few years.

Harassment, as a minor classification of VAP, incorporates numerous crime types. Presently these are:

- Breach of a Restraining Order
- Breach of the Conditions of an Injunction (protection from Harassment Act)
- Causing Harassment, Alarm or Distress
- Causing Intentional Harassment Alarm or Distress
- Disclose private sexual photographs with intent to cause distress (added 2015)
- Fear of Provocation of Violence
- Offence of Harassment
- Pursue Course of Conduct In Breach Of Sec 1 (1) Which Amounts To Stalking (added 2012).
- Putting People in Fear of Violence
- Sending letters etc with intent to cause distress or anxiety **includes electronic messages* (added 2015- 'Malicious Communications')
- Stalking Involving Fear of Violence (added 2013)
- Stalking Involving Serious Alarm/Distress (added 2013)

The impact of the inclusion of previously non-notifiable offences is that at the end of the period to March 2018, the total number of the total recorded Harassment offences had increased by 166% (over 9,800 more recorded offences in twelve months) when compared to twelve-months to March 2012.

Table 1 - % of all harassment by classification expansion
Year to March 2012 to March 2018

Classification - expansion	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Breach of a Restraining Order	8%	5%	6%	5%	5%	6%	6%
Breach of the Conditions of an Injunction: Protection from Harassment Act Only	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Causing Harassment, Alarm or Distress	3%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Causing Intentional Harassment Alarm or Distress	5%	6%	6%	6%	6%	5%	6%
Disclose private sexual photographs with intent to cause distress	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	2%
Fear of Provocation of Violence	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%
Offence of Harassment	73%	78%	78%	76%	35%	39%	32%
Pursue Course Of Conduct In Breach Of Sec 1 (1) Which Amounts To Stalking.	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Putting People in Fear of Violence	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%
Sending letters etc with intent to cause distress or anxiety	0%	0%	0%	0%	44%	40%	44%
Stalking Involving Fear of Violence	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Stalking Involving Serious Alarm/Distress	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Total Harassment Offences	5,925	7,488	8,380	11,570	14,563	15,140	15,742

Table 1 shows that the key driver in the increase across domestic abuse related harassment appears to have been the inclusion of 'Malicious Communications' as a notifiable offence. In the twelve months to March 2016, 'Offence of Harassment' accounted for 35% of all recorded offences within the harassment classification – previously this category accounted for over 75% of all harassment offences recorded by the MPS. In the same period, malicious communications accounted for 44% of all recorded harassment offences whereas previously this was not included.

It is also clear that the inclusion of malicious communications offences has impacted not just recorded domestic abuse related harassment and, in effect, VAP; but also, the overall levels of domestic abuse offences recorded by the MPS. In the twelve months to the end of March 2018, this specific category of offence accounted for almost 9% of all domestic abuse recorded by the MPS. This demonstrates that legislative changes and improved compliance to recording standards has contributed to the increase in police recorded domestic abuse offences.

Although respondents during our interviews of providers, were uncertain about increases in domestic abuse and sexual violence overall, several respondents felt from their experience that increases had occurred for specific offences. Although based on six responses, reference was made to on-line and social media offences, particularly offences of harassment and malicious communications, and that these were particularly marked for young people.

Although this is by no means definitive, this subjective information from those assisting people who have experienced domestic abuse, seems to reflect what we have seen following the inclusion of malicious communications as a notifiable offence.

The impact of reclassification and ‘no-criming’ of sexual offences

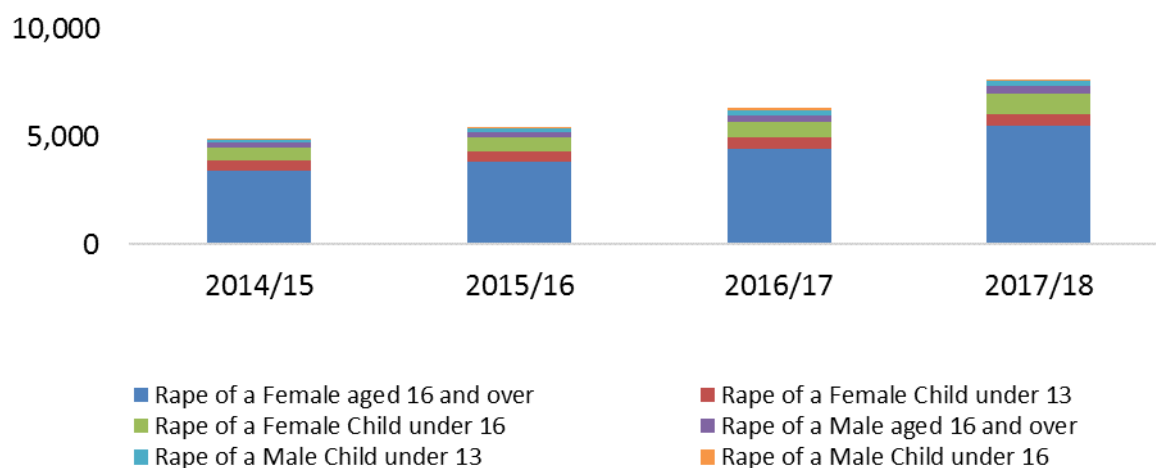
Through our analysis we wanted to test if there had been any change in the way in which sexual offences were recorded by police – here we were specifically testing whether reclassification occurred i.e., rape offences reclassified as other sexual offences and vice versa.

What we found was that in the twelve months to March 2018 7% of sexual offences were reclassified compared to the initial classification that was attributed at the time of recording; broken down as 6.5% of Other Sexual Offences reassessed as Rape Offences, and 4.9% Rape offences reassessed as Other Sexual Offences. What we also saw was for both rape and sexual offences, reclassifications of this type remained unchanged since year ending March 2015. This indicates that the MPS appear to have remained consistent in their assessment and recording of such cases during this period.

We also tested to see if there were any changes in the type of sexual offence recorded by police – however, we found that there has been no shift in this. The hypothesis here was to test if there had been an increase in non-contact sexual offences (voyeurism, exposure etc.) recorded by police that may have attributed to the overall increase. Since year to end March 2015 Sexual assault on a Female aged 13 and over and Rape of a Female aged 16 and over, account for more than half of all Sexual Offences recorded. The third highest is Exposure and Voyeurism, which accounts for approximately 10% of all recorded sexual offences.

Although these types of offences have remained consistent as a proportion of total sexual offences, their volume from year to year have seen significant changes. Compared to end of March 2015, the volume of Sexual Assault on a Female aged 13 and over has increased by 26%, while the volume of Rape of a Female aged 16 and over have increased by 61%.

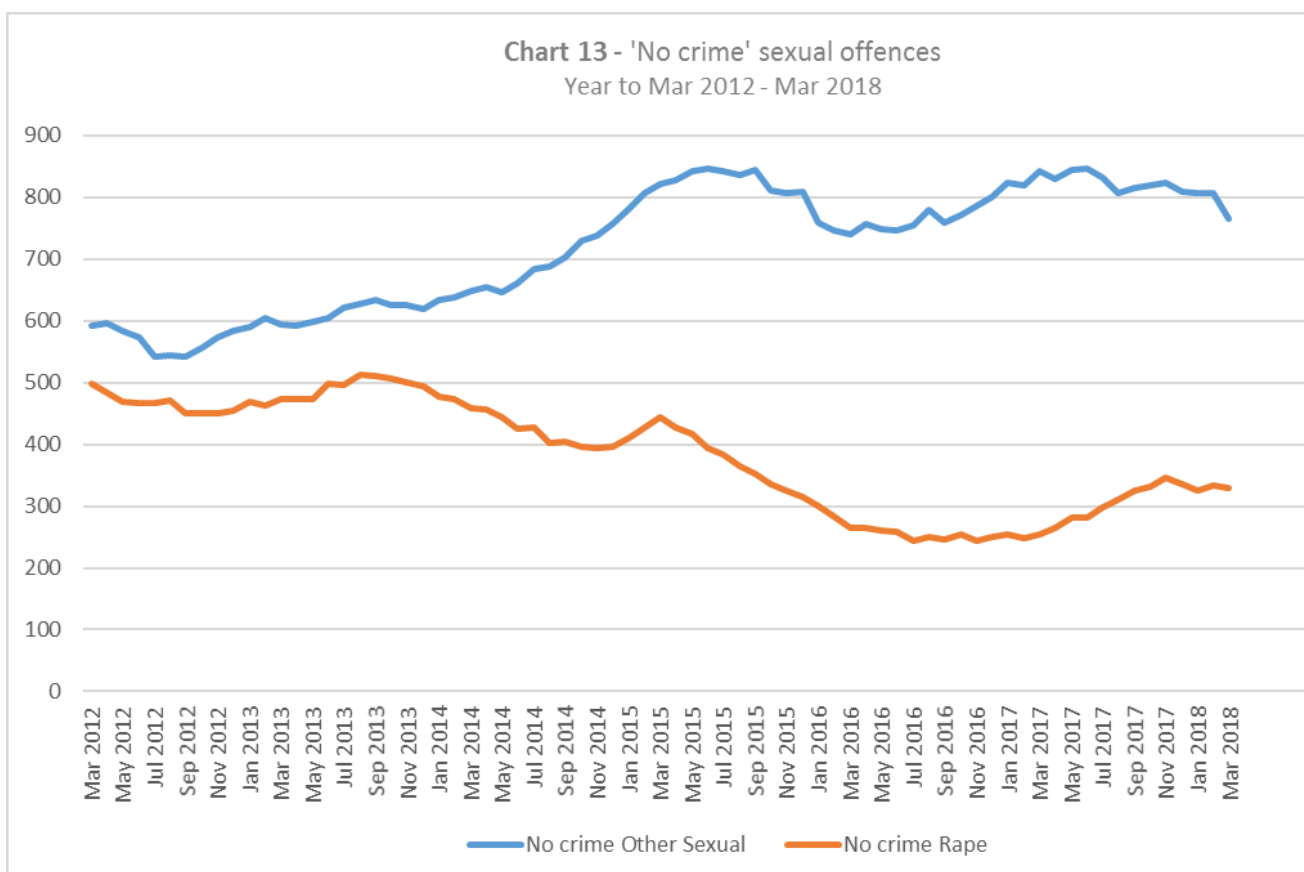
Chart 12 – Proportion of rape by minor classification



As an illustration, between year to March 2015 and to March 2018 the largest category of rape offences was Rape of a Female aged 16 and over, accounting for approximately 7 in 10 of all rape offences. During this period, Rape of a Female aged 16 and over increased by 61%. This is significantly higher than any other category and accounted for 77% of all increases during this period.

Police forces across England and Wales record some crimes which are then subsequently 'no crimed' where they have judged that no crime had taken place. The HOCR set out the circumstances where crimes may be 'no crimed'. These include where a crime was perhaps recorded in error or where additional, verifiable information becomes available that determines that no crime had taken place. Crime reports that are 'no crimed' are not included in police recorded crime statistics and are therefore not part of the annual data return of crimes submitted by police to the Home Office.

In the twelve months to end of March 2018, there were approximately ~1,100 recorded sexual offences that were subsequently 'no-crimed' by the MPS (see chart 13). This was made up of ~760 other sexual offences and ~330 recorded rape offences. As a proportion of the total initially recorded offences, 'no crimed' equated to 5% of all recorded sexual offences, 6% of all other sexual offences and 4% of rapes. This has reduced from 10% in the twelve months to March 2012 for all sexual offences, 8% for other sexual offences and 13% of rapes.



In terms of volumes, there has been a reduction in rape offences that are subsequently ‘no crimed’, yet a slight increase in ‘no crimed’ other sexual offences.

Therefore, more offences of rape are remaining classified as such than in previous years, yet more other sexual offences have been judged to not have been notifiable offences. The reduction in ‘no crimed’ records for rape was clearly apparent from the end of twelve months to March 2015 – indeed, over the course of the following twelve months ‘no crimed’ rape offences reduced by 40%. As at the end of March 2018, ‘no crimed’ rape offences had reduced by a third when compared to the end of March 2012.

We can therefore infer that, whilst a clear positive for survivors, the reduction in ‘no-crimed’ rape has had a negligible impact on the overall levels of recorded sexual offences by the MPS. This is further supported by the increase in recorded rape offences as at the end of March 2018 being 134% (over 4,000 more recorded offences) compared to March 2012.

The impact of recorded historic sexual offences

We know from previous ONS publications, that the launch of Operation Yewtree and the associated media coverage was considered to have had some form of impact on the propensity of victims of non-recent sexual offences to come forward. In the recent release by ONS into sexual offences in England and Wales²⁶ there was an increase in non-recent sexual offences recorded by police (those that took place longer than 12 months ago) in the twelve months to March 2017 of 16% compared to the previous period.

Further, over the last five years represented, the number of non-recent offences recorded by police had more than tripled. However, the rises seen in these non-recent offences is in line with all sexual offences recorded, with non-recent sexual offences representing a similar proportion of the total number recorded as in previous years. This means that recent sexual offences have also increased and are the main contributor to the total level of sexual offences recorded by police across England and Wales.

Using MPS recorded crime data, we have explored the potential impact of historic reporting on the overall levels of recorded sexual offences across London. To identify these, the difference between ‘recorded’ and ‘committed on/from’ dates was used²⁷. By defining non-recent sexual offences in the same way as ONS, i.e. those that had been recorded twelve months or more after the date committed, it is possible to indicate the changes in non-recent offences over time.

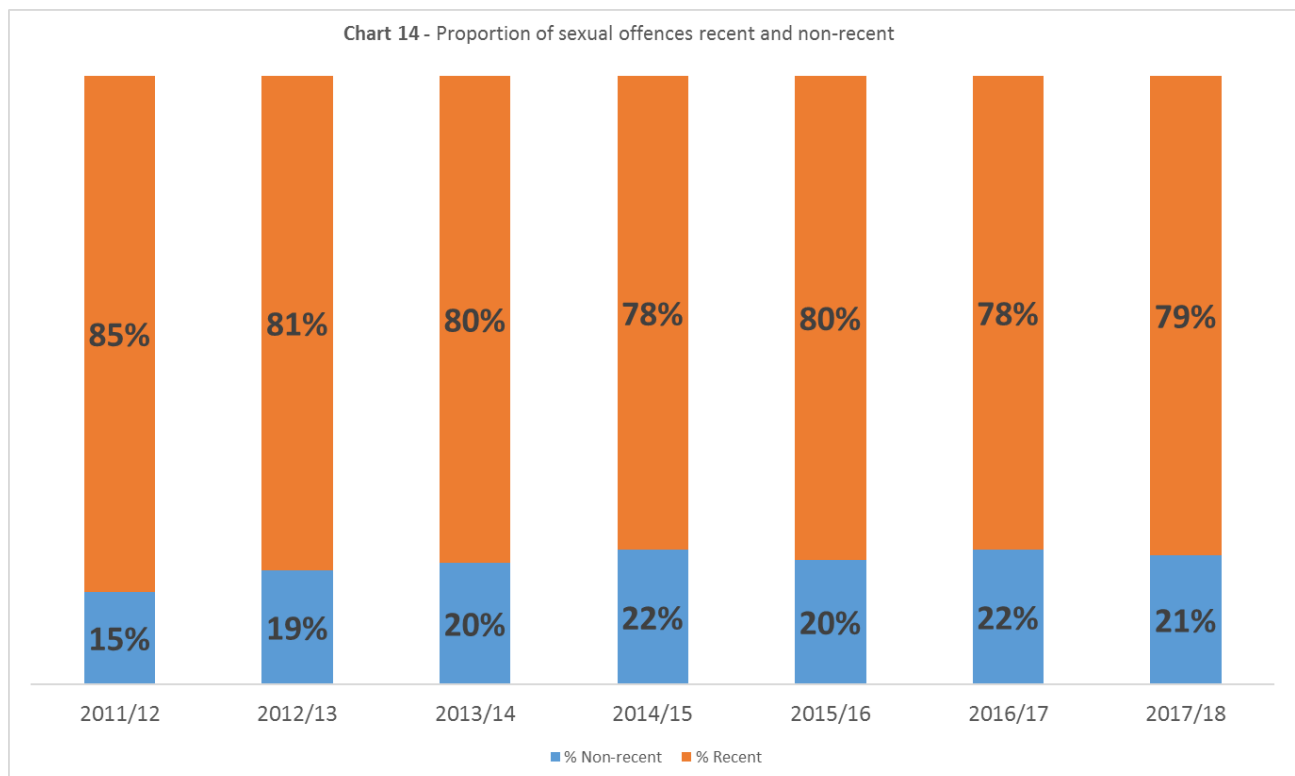
Also, by comparing the most recently recorded data to March 2018 with the period to March 2013 (following the launch of Operation Yewtree) we can see that the number of recorded offences that occurred at least twelve months prior to the recorded date had increased by 134%. However, it is also apparent that over the same time recorded ‘recent’ offences (i.e.

²⁶ ONS Sexual Offences in England and Wales: year ending March 2017
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/sexualoffencesinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2017>

²⁷ Only those offences whereby a ‘committed on/from date’ was recorded were used for this analysis

those that had occurred less than twelve months previous) had also doubled with both recent and non-recent offences having a clear upward trend in terms of recorded crime.

We also observed that the proportion of total recorded sexual offences that are non-recent has remained consistent since year ending March 2013 (see chart 14) and represents approximately one in five recorded offences. This is an increase in proportion from one in seven offences being non-recent in the period²⁸ prior to the launch of Operation Yewtree.



Therefore, the proportion of recent offences continue to make up the largest proportion of recorded sexual offences. It may be that the media coverage of high-profile historic sex offences, may have also impacted on the likelihood of victims to report recent offences. However, from the recorded crime series, it is not possible to categorically state this to be the case. The potential role of media coverage was echoed through our interviews with stakeholders - who generally reported to us that there had been an increase in such historic cases particularly in the number of men coming forward, with the perceived driving factor being increased coverage, particularly following the Savile case.

Has there been any change to who experiences these offences?

To better understand what is beneath the numbers for both domestic abuse and sexual offences, we need to better understand who are more likely to be victims of these crimes.

As with the general data conundrum discussed at the beginning of this report, we also see some divergence between the people who indicate victimisation via the self-completion module of the CSEW and the victims recorded by police.

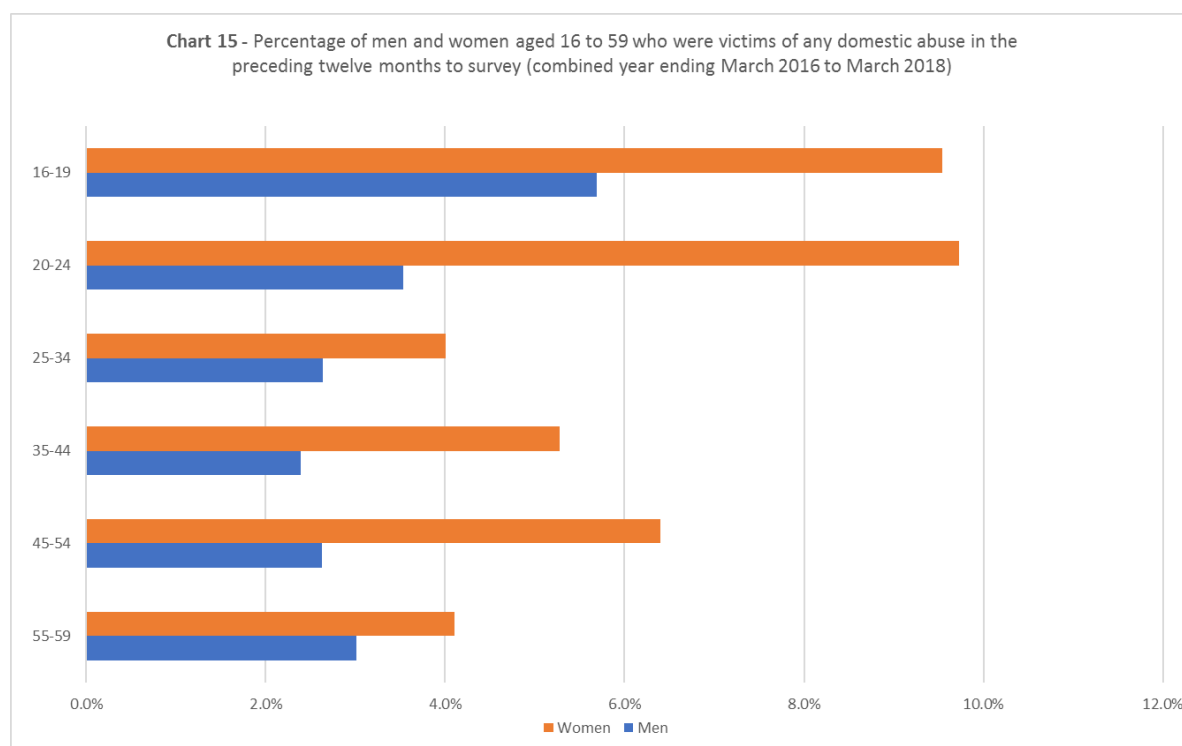
²⁸ Twelve months to end of March 2012

As we know from the prevalence estimates, women are far more likely than men to experience both types of victimisation. This is also the case for the recorded domestic abuse and sexual offences, whereby the proportion of women and men that experienced these offences has remained consistent over time.

However, as part of the publication²⁹ of London level responses to CSEW for these, it is possible to further infer the personal characteristics of victims of domestic abuse and sexual assaults.

What ages are more likely to experience domestic abuse and sexual offences?

From CSEW results for London, younger age groups, for both men and women, experienced a higher prevalence of domestic abuse (see chart 15)³⁰. Particularly, women aged between 16 and 19 and between 20 and 24 were more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse (9.5% and 9.7% respectively) compared with those in the 55 to 59 aged group (4.1%). This can also be seen in the case of younger men, with the 16 to 19 age group having a higher prevalence than those in the 55-59 age group (5.7% compared to 3%).



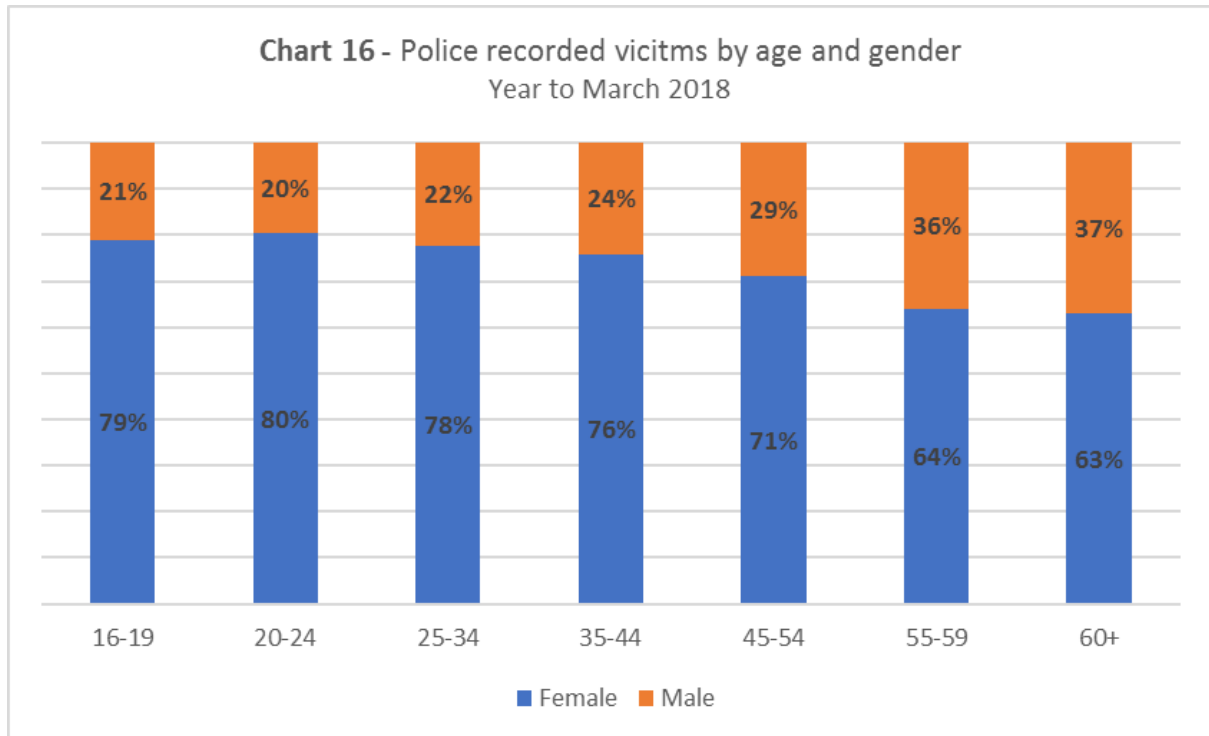
These findings compare to almost half of all victims (irrespective of gender) being aged between 20 and 34 years of age (45%) in the police recorded crime series in the last year. The largest proportion of these were in the 25 and 34 years of age bracket. This potentially reveals insights into specific age groups that require more support or focus to come forward.

²⁹

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/adhocs/008805crimesurveyenglandandwales/estimatesofsexualassaultanddomesticabuseexperiencedbyadultsaged16to59>

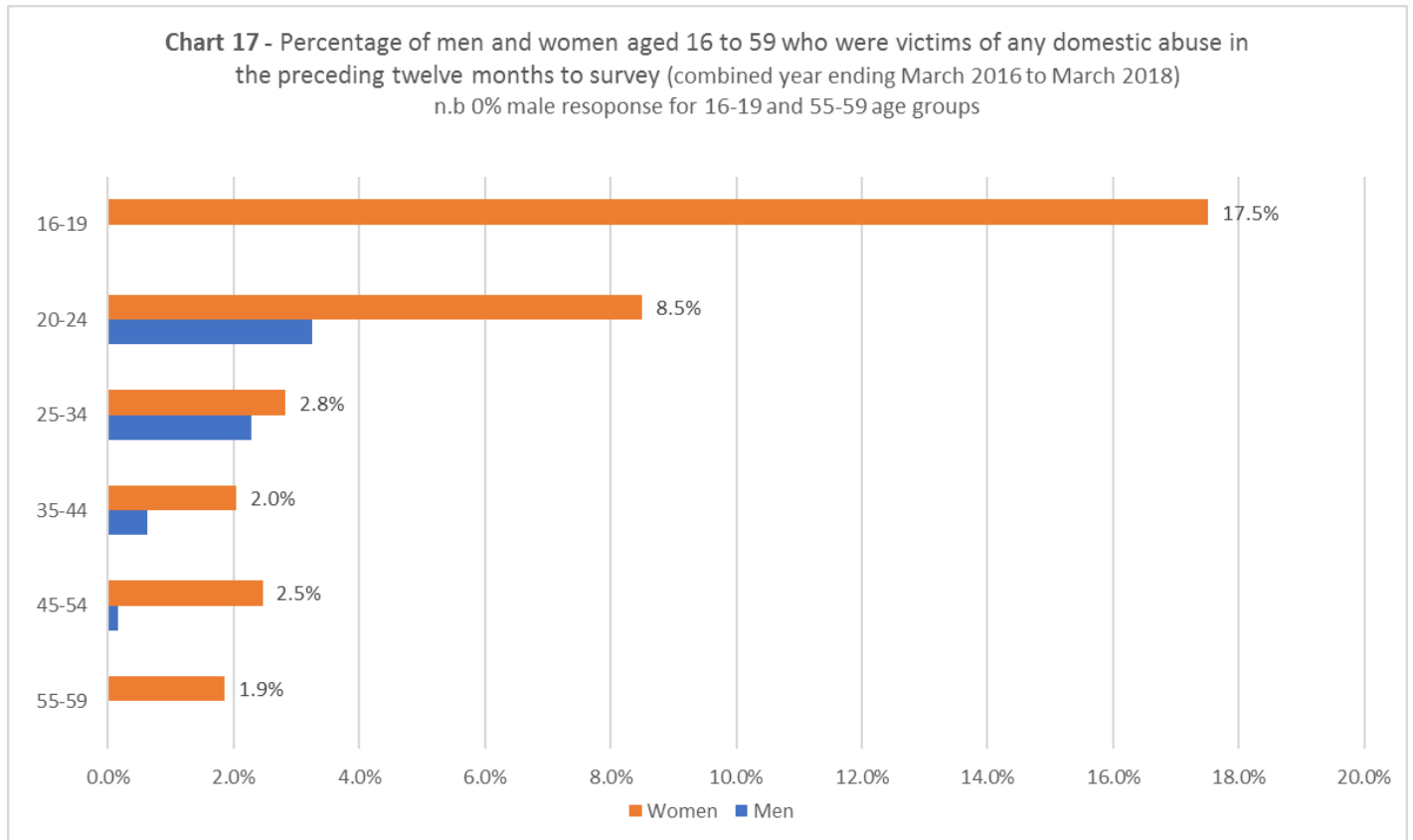
³⁰ Ibid

However, there is differentiation seen across the age ranges in relation to victim’s gender (see chart 16). This illustrates that as the age of victims increase, the proportions shift in that female victims account for a smaller proportion.



The police recorded crime series also showed that despite the recognition of 16 and 17-year olds as victims of domestic abuse since year ending March 2014, this has had negligible impact on the overall volume of victims of recorded domestic abuse offences. Each year since March 2014, 16 and 17-year olds accounted for between 2% and 3% of all recorded victims of domestic abuse. This therefore indicates that domestic abuse recorded by police may not represent the true scale of the impact on these younger victims.

Similarly, to the domestic abuse findings from CSEW, women aged between 16 and 19 and between 20 and 24 were far more likely to be victims of any sexual assault (17.5% and 8.5% respectively) compared with those in the 55 to 59 aged group (1.9%). This is also case for victims of indecent exposure or unwanted touching with 16.8% of women aged between 16 and 19 and 7.7% of women aged between 20 and 24 experiencing this type of incident in the preceding year. For rape or assault by penetration (including attempts) 7.5% of women aged between 16 and 19 indicated they had experienced this type of offence (see chart 17).

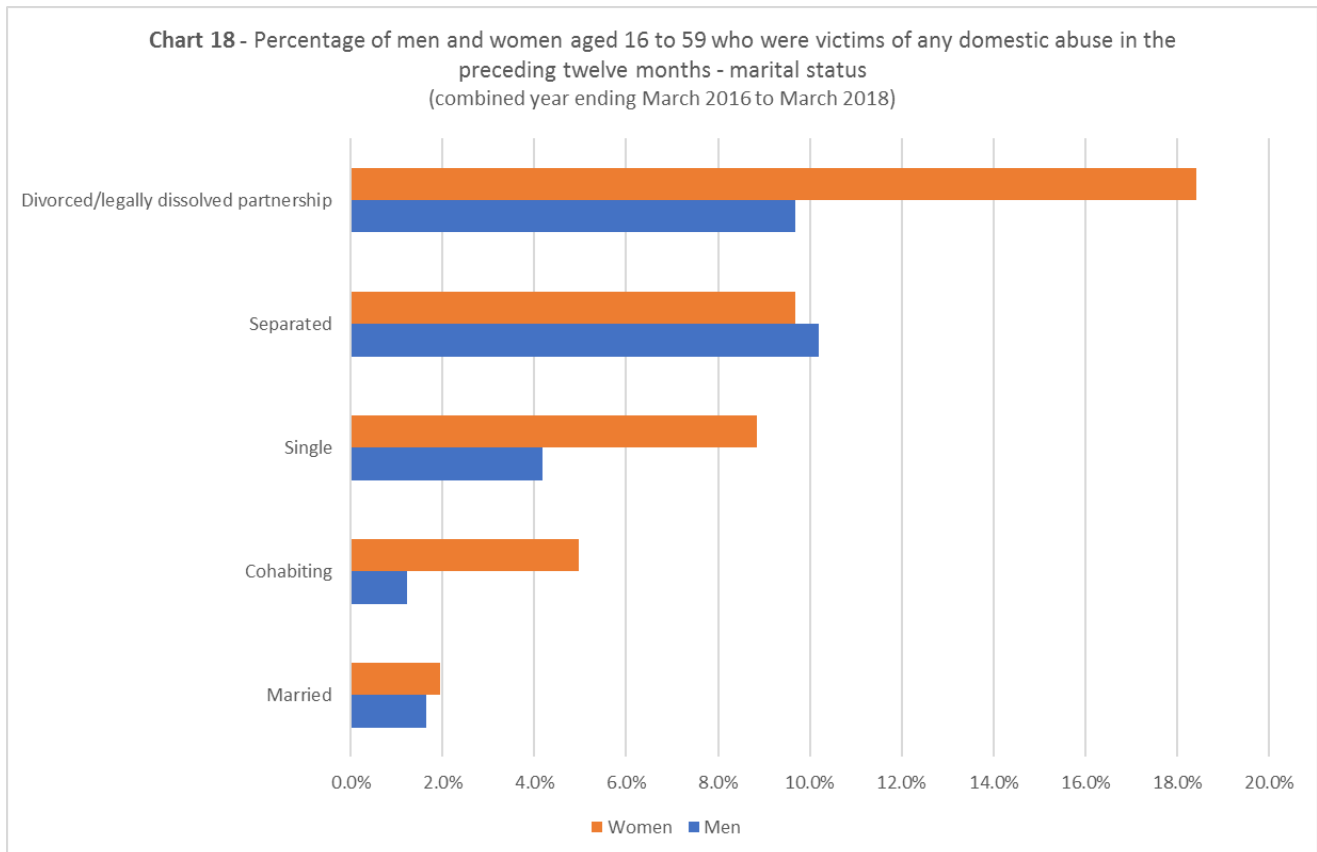


More than half of female victims of sexual offences recorded by police were aged between 17 and 34 years, yet more than a quarter of female victims of recorded rape offences were aged between 16 and 21 years old. This is like the CSEW findings whereby the highest proportion of respondents having experienced rape in the year prior to survey were younger.

The CSEW cohort for this report is restricted to only those victims aged between 16 and 59 years of age. However, we know from the police recorded crime, that those aged 16 and under accounted for a quarter of all recorded victims of sexual offences recorded in the twelve months to March 2018.

What is the marital status of those who experience domestic abuse and sexual offences?

Adults who were separated and divorced at the time of interview as part of the Crime Survey for England and Wales, were most likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the preceding 12 months. This is true for both men and women. Data for those who had been widowed was not available (see chart 18).

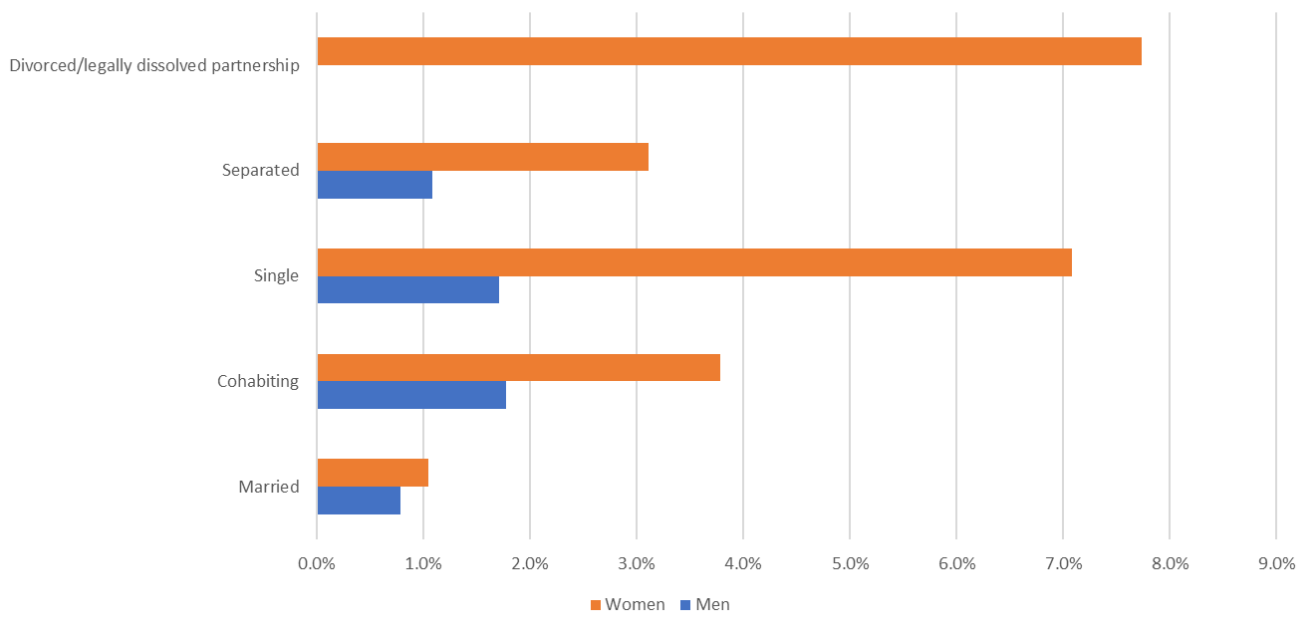


In terms of the relationships identified between domestic abuse offenders and victims (where data is available) from the police recorded crime, the majority are of an intimate or ex-intimate nature. Almost seven in ten relationships recorded during the twelve months to March 2018 were within this category. Almost a quarter of all identified relationships were where the offender was the 'Ex-Boyfriend' of the victim.

Familial relationships were less frequent, with close family members most frequently recorded in this grouping— 28% of all familial relationships indicated that the offender was the son of the victim. This was reflected in responses during our research interviews, that service providers perceived an increase in violent offences by children towards parents and grandparents.

For those who had experienced sexual assault (see chart 19) in the year preceding the survey also were most frequently separated or divorced (7.7%). However, this was closely followed by those who were single (7.1%).

Chart 19 - Percentage of men and women aged 16 to 59 who were victims of any sexual assault in the preceding twelve months - marital status (combined year ending March 2016 to March 2018)



Single women were slightly more likely to have experienced indecent exposure or unwanted touching followed by divorced women (6.3% and 5.7% respectively). No data was available for widowed victims.

Although marital status is not an identifiable field within the recorded crime data it is possible to comment on the general findings of the relationships between suspects and victims for sexual offences. In the twelve months to March 2018 we can see that over half of all sexual offences, where a suspect has been identified, that the victim and suspect are known to each other in some way. Intimate or ex-intimate relationships were recorded in 5% of all recorded other sexual offences where a relationship was identified yet almost one in five for rape offences.

What is the experience for those with long-standing illness or disability?

For domestic abuse, the CSEW results indicate that those with a long-term illness or disability were more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the preceding 12 months than those without a long-term illness or disability. This was true for both men (4.7% compared with 2.7%) and women (18% compared with 4.5%).

One in ten women who indicated a long-standing illness or disability had experienced any form of sexual assault compared to just 3 in 100 for those without long standing illness or disability.

Does household structure and income feature?

The results from CSEW related to domestic abuse also allows us to comment on the household structure and income of the respondents who had experienced this type of abuse in the twelve months preceding interview.

The findings show that just under 1 in 8 single adult women living with children (13.4%) were victims of domestic abuse in the preceding 12 months to the survey compared with 6.4% of those living in a household with no children and 3.7% of those living in a household with other adults and children.

In terms of income, almost 4 times as many women in the lowest income bracket (less than £10,000 per annum) had experienced domestic abuse in the preceding 12 months (12.8%), compared with those in the highest household income bracket (£50,000+ per annum = 3.7%).

Section 2 Key Findings

- Following the publication of HMICFRS Crime Data Integrity reports in 2014, there was an increase in the levels of recorded violence and sexual offences – two areas that were found to have been under-recorded by police across England and Wales
- Following the launch of Operation Yewtree there was a slight increase in recorded sexual offences
- The addition of previously non-notifiable offences such as malicious communications has had a clear impact on recorded crime
- There has been a reduction in the level of ‘no-criming’ of rape offences and a slight increase for other sexual offences with the impact of ‘no-criming’ deemed to be negligible. The MPS appear to have remained consistent in their assessment and recording of sexual offences that come to their attention
- There was a clear increase in the number of historic sexual offences coming to the attention of the police following the launch of Operation Yewtree with historic offences recorded by police have increased by 134% over five years.
- Younger adult victims appear under-represented in the police data
- 1 in 8 single adult women living with children were victims of domestic abuse in the preceding 12 months to the survey compared with 6.4% of those living in a household with no children
- For sexual assaults women who were separated and divorced (7.7%) were the most likely to be victims
- There are clear indications that vulnerabilities such as long-term illness or disability and low-income impact on the likelihood of victimisation

Section 3: Is there evidence that victims are more willing to come forward to the police?

Although police recorded crime has seen significant increases for both domestic abuse and sexual offences, as outlined the prevalence as measured by the CSEW has remained stable. This evidence thus far indicates that these increases are likely to have been heavily impacted by better compliance on behalf of police forces in recording crimes that come to their attention.

It is not possible from the police recorded crime data to infer any increased confidence to report to police by those who experience these crimes. Such a measure is not captured within police data - which makes the question as to victim willingness a difficult one to explore.

However, from their own assessments, ONS publications indicate that the increases seen in recorded domestic abuse are likely to be impacted by *both* increased compliance with recording standards and a willingness to report. In exploring this issue, we can draw upon CSEW data which asks victims about prevalence of reporting to police, as well as our own interviews with stakeholders.

What evidence is there of increased willingness of individuals reporting to police?

The strongest data in terms of levels of reporting sexual assaults and domestic abuse comes from the victims themselves in the CSEW (and previously the British Crime Survey – see table 2). Although, even though this is the strongest data, it is not without flaws. However, these questions are not routinely answered and so we only have snapshots across many years.

Table 2 - Who respondents told following incident

Survey Source	Told Anyone						Told Police					
	1999/2000 (BCS)	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	1999/2000 (BCS)	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
CSEW -Victims of Sexual Assault	70%	58%			68%		18%	17%			17%	
CSEW - Victims of Domestic Partner Abuse			81%			72%			21%			17%
Public Attitude Survey (London) – All victims			75%	74%	72%	71%			70%	69%	66%	65%

For sexual offences, the proportions of victims that stated they reported to the police has remained stable since 1999/2000, and stable for domestic abuse from 2014/15. Essentially, there is no evidence within the CSEW of any increase in the proportion of victims reporting to police. As outlined, this data is the best proxy of victim willingness to report we have. In the case of domestic partner abuse, approximately 17% of respondents told the police about their experience over the last twelve months (to March 2018). This is a reduction from 21% when this was last asked as part of the survey in year ending March 2015. There has also been a reduction in the proportion of respondents telling anyone about their experiences – from 81% in year ending March 2015 to 72% in the twelve months to March 2018.

For sexual assault, an average of 17% of respondents told the police over the time series available and there has been little change in respondents having told anyone.

In addition, we know from police recorded crime, for example, how offences come to the attention of police remains largely unchanged over time. More than four in five (83%) recorded domestic abuse offences in the twelve months to March 2018 were reported via a phone call to the police, while one in ten recorded offences were reported at a police station.

Whilst not covering sexual assault or domestic abuse, findings from the MOPAC Public Attitude Survey present a similar picture in terms of overall levels of reporting to the police. This survey covers over 12,000 Londoners per year, and as such is a larger sample of Londoners compared to the CSEW. As a useful proxy, PAS indicates around 65-70% of victims told the police they had experienced any form of crime – a figure that has been relatively stable over the past four years – albeit a small drop in the financial year 17/18. Slightly more respondents from the PAS report they told anyone of the crime – again a figure that has been slightly reducing over the previous four years.

Our own research interviews asked our sample of service providers whether they have seen an increased willingness on the part of survivors to report to the police. Views were mixed overall, and instead of an increased willingness to report to police, respondents spoke about the perceived improvements in the knowledge and willingness of victims to seek out wider support. In this way, many of our respondents felt that demand on their own organisation had increased³¹, in terms of the number of referrals to their organisation, increases in caseload over time and in the number of clients on their waiting lists (for those organisations that provided counselling for example). There were mixed views as to the reasons behind these increases, responses generally did not think it was being influenced by 'more crime' per se, but issues relating to the media (i.e., historic abuse by celebrities), better liaisons with wider services, or increases in the number of staff members employed by the support organisations themselves.

Another strong theme to emerge from the interviews around the perceived increase in referrals was the improved location and accessibility of services, such as the location of IDVAs in hospitals, their co-location with the police, the use of out-reach workers (an example cited was an individual who worked with probation hubs, contacting female ex-offenders who have just left prison), and work with organisations that support female sex-workers.

As touched upon earlier, one respondent at interview suggested the increased media coverage following the Savile case, for both historical and non-recent reporting, conveyed the message to survivors that the police wanted to talk to victims about the issue, and that there is help available. Furthermore, another example was provided where a victim had come forward regarding historic abuse after seeing media coverage – the provider stated that this had made the victim realise that they had been a victim of abuse whereas they had never thought of their relationship as abusive before.

³¹ Thirteen of fifteen respondents

What are the potential reasons for not reporting to police?

There has been a wealth of academic research exploring the potential reasons for non-reporting to police of such sensitive crimes. In a large-scale review Voce & Boxall (2018) explored 21 quantitative victim self-report studies conducted in Australia, New Zealand, UK, USA and Canada since 1980 related to the reporting experiences of victims of domestic abuse reporting that *'victim and offender characteristics are less reliable predictors of reporting than characteristics of the relationship and the incident itself'*. That is, incidents that involve serious violence, an intoxicated offender or a child witness are more likely to be reported.

Voce and Boxall (2018) also summarises many of the consistent barriers to reporting, such as:

- Fear of not being believed by the police;
- Desire to protect the offender;
- Fear of negatively impacting the family (e.g. removal of children, dissolution of the relationship);
- Economic dependence on the perpetrator;
- Privacy concerns;
- Fear of exposing their own illegal activities; and
- Fear of retribution and the escalation of violence

From our own review of literature various factors which may be important in understanding why survivors of sexual offences are less likely to report their experiences to the police were identified. Overall, research suggests that sexual violence between intimate partners is less likely to be reported to the police than stranger cases, particularly amongst male victims (Gartner and Macmillan, 1993). It is worth noting however, that some research has shown women who have experienced violent crime are more likely to report to police when victimised by their partner (Kaukinen, 2002).

Psychological factors and the relationship with survivors reporting cases of sexual violence to the police is heavily discussed throughout the published literature. Notions of shame, blame and fear are consistently recognised as the most widely experienced barrier to reporting (Ceelen, 2016).

In addition to the psychological barriers, choosing not to report sexual violence has been shown to sustain a survivor's social identity, their relationships and educational prospects; thus, a desirable option as opposed to reporting to police (Khan et al, 2018).

The extent to which a sexual offence case may be perceived as 'real' or 'believable' is also influential to a survivor's decision to report their experience to the police (Brown et al, 2007). Rape that occurs alongside another crime has been suggested to increase the extent to which a survivor feels their allegation will be believed and consequently influences their likelihood of reporting (Addington and Rennison, 2008). Similarly, cases of sexual violence involving weapons or resulting in injury have been shown to increase police reporting, whereas those involving drugs or alcohol had the opposite effect (Fisher et al, 2003; Woltzky-Taylor et al, 2011).

In addition, we asked interviewees during our research to indicate reasons why they felt victims were reluctant to report victimisation, and to indicate any perceived gaps in reporting. Interviewees spoke of the *stressors of the CIS* - our interviewees raised issues such as a lengthy court process, cross-examination and a perceived lack of 'people focus' in the courts as well as the perceived quality of treatment from the police of such victims - as factors that could discourage victims from reporting.

London's Victims Commissioner has also conducted work with women and girls directly affected by domestic abuse who have experienced barriers in receiving support because of their immigration status³² leading to reticence to report the abuse to authorities in fear of being deported.

Our interviewees also raised some wider groupings where they perceived more support was required - such as:

- BAME victims may be less willing to come forward potentially influenced by their wider perceptions towards the police;
- Males being less likely to come forward for fear of being viewed as weak;
- How the potential fear of being ostracised or isolated from some communities may lead some not to report.

The recently published analysis by ONS into sexual offences in England and Wales³³ shows that although there are low levels of reporting to police, almost half of those victims that report did so because they wanted to prevent it happening to others or that it was the right thing to do. Conversely, the most frequent reasons for victims to tell anyone but not to tell the police were due to embarrassment, feeling that the police couldn't help or that it would be humiliating to report.

Section 3 Key Findings

- Based on the most reliable evidence from the CSEW, there is no compelling evidence of an increase in victim confidence to report
- For domestic abuse and sexual offences, the level of response to CSEW that indicates people have told police remains relatively consistent over time
- Reasons for not reporting are varied and complex and often linked to the seriousness of the offence or the relationship with the offender
- As shown in both interview responses and the response from surveys for victims who 'told anyone' - it appears victims are looking for support, rather than looking to report. However, this support appears to be more frequently sought from friends or family

³² <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/protect-victims-of-crime-with-insecure-status>

³³ Sexual offences in England and Wales: year ending March 2017 ONS – February 2018

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/sexualoffencesinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2017#reporting-of-sexual-assault-by-rape-or-penetration>

Conclusions

The 'data conundrum', highlighted by the consistent estimated prevalence provided via the subjective responses to the CSEW versus the steep and continuing increases in the objective measures of crime recorded by police, is not easily reconcilable. Estimating the prevalence in the London population also indicates that there is still a large gap between the level of recorded crime and those that people experience.

There is evidence that changes to police activities, compliance with standards and changes to Home Office rules for counting crime are most likely to have made the largest impact on the levels of crime recorded. Indeed, it must be stated that the committed efforts of the MPS following the HMICFRS report of 2014 have resulted in independently assessed measurable success in improving crime data integrity. The latest report graded the MPS as 'good' in the overall judgment of the service and that the MPS "has made concerted efforts to improve crime-recording accuracy since our 2014 crime data integrity inspection report. Importantly, we found a commitment to accurate crime recording that is victim-focused and free from performance pressures of any kind.". In the summary, HMICFRS highlighted that the MPS had implemented all recommendations from the previous report and that the force achieves good levels of recording accuracy for reported sexual offences. These inspection results seem to validate our main findings that the levels of recorded crime now better reflect those incidents coming to the attention of police, rather than an increase in the prevalence of such incidents. Furthermore, our own findings in relation to sexual offences recorded by the police, indicate consistent use of 'no-criming' in relevant situations and that the 'downgrading' of offences does not occur, indicating a consistent approach being applied by those investigating and recording crimes of this nature.

However, it is difficult to extract from the recorded crime data as to what extent better compliance leads to improved confidence in victims of crime coming forward to report. ONS stated in their latest publication of November 2018 into domestic abuse across England and Wales, that the increase in recorded crime may be driven, in part, by an increased willingness for victims to come forward. It could be that the police response and the availability and awareness of other services may have impacted on the number of incidents coming to police attention.

Although the estimates provided by CSEW responses shows no significant increase in respondents reporting to authorities, we also cannot dismiss the potential impact recent public campaigns such as the #MeToo movement may have had on victim and witness willingness to report incidents to police or others. It follows that an increased awareness amongst the public of issues of violence and harassment against women and girls would lead to less tolerance of domestic abuse and sexual offences going unreported. Also, as our research found, through increased publicity some survivors have come to realise that they may have been in abusive relationships, where they had not previously thought of these as such.

We have also found that, in addition to the improved compliance with recording practices, other factors such as highly publicised investigations and convictions related to historic sexual abuse also impacted on recorded levels of crime. This saw a sharp increase in historic

offending coming to the attention of the police, and an increased proportion of offences per year being of a non-recent nature.

Through this exploration we can say with more clarity who these crimes affect and where they occur. Although domestic abuse is experienced across all areas of London, our analysis shows that victims of domestic abuse who live in areas of London which are vulnerable to community stability issues experience more offences than those who live in areas that do not. These more vulnerable areas are often located in Inner London boroughs and areas with higher levels of deprivation. Although the vulnerable localities profile uses multiple indicators, this seems to chime with the findings from the characteristics of domestic abuse victims via the CSEW – particularly in terms of household characteristics. This could also be the case for those areas with low community stability issues – more often areas that are more affluent - with CSEW results showing that prevalence among those who earn more is reportedly lower. However, this may also indicate less willingness of those experiencing these offences in these areas to report to police.

It is also of note that CSEW results indicate that those who live with long -term illness or disability report experiencing domestic abuse at a higher level than those who do not have these issues. Therefore, more needs to be done to understand the nature of domestic abuse in these situations and to ensure our responses to these vulnerable victims is appropriate.

We know from our own analytics that more vulnerable locations experience more offences. Crimes are not equally spaced but cluster in specific areas - and as such many of these areas will not be sampled adequately by the CSEW, especially at the London level where the target interview range³⁴ is between 3,800 and 3,900. There will also be sampling error, individuals not wanting to disclose victimisation, certain types of address are not included (i.e., residents of care homes are not interviewed) and so on. So, whilst the CSEW is the strongest data on victim reporting, it is not without limitation.

Similarly, for sexual offending, although there is no correlation to areas with community stability issues, offences occur across London. However, unlike domestic abuse that occurs more within private premises, sexual offences often occur in public areas or parts of the capital where Londoners and others from further afield congregate for tourism, social and leisure purposes.

We know from our own interviews and the wider academic literature that the reasons for reporting, or not, to the police or other authorities are complex and varied. Often, these reasons are personal to the victim and are rooted in emotional responses to the events such as embarrassment or shame. Moreover, the literature also suggests that often reasons for not reporting are linked to the seriousness of the offence or the relationship with the offender.

Ultimately, regardless of better police capture of information or more confidence in reporting via data discussions and CSEW, one aspect that is undeniable is the increase on police demand over recent years. These are often serious offences and behind each of these police reports is an individual and in many cases these individuals may be vulnerable. The focus moving

³⁴

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/methodologies/crimeandjusticemethodology>

forwards should be that the findings of this analysis will feed into MOPAC's and our partners' approach to tackling VAWG. Clearly, we need to focus our joint efforts on the areas of concern, to the people affected and to influence the willingness of survivors of domestic abuse and sexual offending to come forward – be that to report or to seek out support.

Appendix: MOPAC Interview Schedule

(Introduction – background to research, research outputs, consent issues)

1. **Could you tell us a bit about your background, and your role at [insert organisation]?**

Prompt if not spontaneously mentioned:

- *How long have you worked in this role?*
- *What roles did you do before coming to this organisation?*
- *Could you tell us a bit about what your day-to-day work involves?*
- *In what capacity do you normally interact with survivors of domestic abuse/sexual violence?*

2. **Could you tell us about services provided by your organisation, and the types of survivors you work with?**

Prompt if not spontaneously mentioned:

- *What services does your organisation provide for survivors of domestic abuse/sexual violence?*
- *Does your organisation provide services for all victims of domestic abuse/sexual violence, or does it work specifically with certain groups?*
- *What types of people tend to seek help from your organisation, for example victims of certain crime types, or people from specific backgrounds or demographic groups?*
- *At what point do survivors tend to come into contact with your organisation (for example, before or after they have reported to the police, at the time of an offence or after?)*

3. **Would you say there have been any changes to the number of survivors accessing your organisation's services over the last few years [or time in role]?**

If necessary clarify: For example, have the number of survivors increased or decreased, or have you not seen any change?

Prompt if necessary (if interviewee feels there has been a change):

- *When did you start seeing this increase/decrease?*
- *What, if any, impact has this increase/decrease had upon your organisation?*
- *What do you feel may be driving this increase/decrease?*

4. **Would you say that there have been any changes in survivors' willingness to come forward to seek help for domestic abuse/sexual violence over the last few years [or time in role]?**

If necessary clarify: For example, do you feel that survivors have become more or less willing to seek help, or would you say that there has been no change?

Prompt if necessary (if interviewee feels there has been a change):

- *Over what timeframe have you seen this change?*
- *Have these changes been seen for any specific types of domestic abuse/sexual assault victims, or would you say they are across the board?*
- *What impact do you think this increase/decrease in willingness to come forward has had upon survivors?*
- *What impact do you think this change in willingness to come forward has had upon your organisation/the police?*

5. What do you feel may be the reasons behind this change in victims' willingness to seek help?

Prompt if not spontaneously mentioned:

- *Do you feel there has been any impact of recent high-profile cases/media coverage/social media movements upon victims' willingness to come forwards to seek help; this could be either positive or negative? (For example the Harvey Weinstein case or the #MeToo movement).*
- *Do you feel there have been any changes in public confidence in the police or support organisations?*
- *Do you feel there have been any changes in the levels of service provided by these agencies?*
- *Do you think these changes have affected any specific groups of survivors more than others, for example those from certain backgrounds, or those who have experienced certain types of domestic abuse/sexual assault?*

6. Thinking more widely, have you noticed any other changes in the types of survivors that access your organisation's services over recent years [or time in role]?

Prompt if not spontaneously mentioned:

- *Have you seen any changes in the types of crimes that victims are seeking help about?*
- *Have you seen an increase in reported cases of harassment and malicious communications?*
- *Have you seen any changes in victim demographics?*
- *Have you seen any changes in victims' previous experiences of domestic abuse/sexual assault, for example historical vs. recent offences?*
- *Have you seen any changes in the types of pathways through which victims are referred?*
- *Have there been any changes in the types of services offered by your organisation?*

7. In general, how well do you feel the police respond to domestic abuse/sexual violence crimes?

Prompt if not spontaneously mentioned:

- *How effective do you feel the police are at bringing offenders to justice?*
- *How effective do you feel the police are at supporting vulnerable victims/safeguarding victims from harm?*
- *How well do you feel the police work with other organisations (e.g. support organisations or the wider CPS) to support survivors of domestic abuse/sexual violence?*
- *Are there any gaps or opportunities in the service provided for victims of domestic abuse/sexual violence?*

8. What do you feel may be the key barriers that prevent someone who has experienced domestic abuse/sexual violence from seeking help?

Prompt if not spontaneously mentioned:

- *Are there any differences in these barriers for reporting to the police compared with reporting to support organisations?*

9. Do you feel there are any specific groups of survivors who may be less likely to seek help than others?

Prompt if not spontaneously mentioned:

- *Are there any demographic groups that may be less likely to seek help from the police or support organisations about their experiences?*
- *Are there any offence types where you feel survivors may be particularly unlikely to come forward for help?*
- *What do you feel may be driving these differences in the likelihood for victims to come forward?*

10. What improvements do you feel could be made to help provide a better service for victims of domestic abuse/sexual violence?

Prompt if necessary:

- *For example, any improvements to services provided by the police, CJS or support organisations?*

(Thanks for participating in the research. Contact details of researchers)