

7. Research

7.1 Information from UK national research about the incidence, scale and effects of domestic violence on men

The main source of information about violence from a partner or ex-partner to men and women in England and Wales are the Home Office British Crime Surveys and homicide statistics. Since 1998 there have been specific sections on violence from partners and ex-partners. The most recent at the time of writing is the report 'Homicide, Firearms Offences and Intimate Violence (Smith, Osborne, Lau and Britton, 2012) using data from the 2010-2011 British Crime Survey (BCS). The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey provides data about partner abuse in Scotland. There is currently no data from Northern Ireland which is equivalent to these two surveys. This chapter includes data from the England and Wales survey and from the Scotland survey. Each reference will show clearly which survey it originates from.

Both sets of data include physical, sexual and some non-physical abuse in their definitions of abuse. Some data is presented in the reports excluding sexual assault – we have only included the figures which include sexual assault, but this may mean you see figures which are different from ones you have seen before as some organisations use the figures excluding sexual assault in their information. The BCS also uses the term 'domestic abuse', which includes abuse from other adult family members as well as partners. The use of different definitions can often mislead policy makers and practitioners about the levels of partner abuse – data using both definitions is included here to demonstrate this. The Scottish Survey data is specifically about partner abuse. We have included some of the data for 'domestic abuse' and some for the more specific 'partner abuse'.

For 2010-2011:

England and Wales

- 17% of men and 30% of women in England and Wales reported experiencing one or more incidents of any domestic abuse (which includes abuse from partners and also abuse from any other adult family member as well as partner or ex-partner) since the age of 16 (Smith et al, 2012).
- 14% of men and 26% of women in England and Wales reported experiencing one or more incidents of abuse from a partner or ex-partner (not including other family members) since the age of 16 (Smith et al, 2012).
- There was no statistically significant difference in the level of domestic abuse between the 2008/09 and 2009/10 BCS (Smith et al, 2012).

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- Levels of domestic abuse experienced in the previous year have generally declined for both men and women since 2004/05 when the module was first included in the BCS on a comparable basis (Smith et al, 2012).
- An estimated 784,000 men in England and Wales experienced domestic abuse in the last year, which includes abuse from family members as well as partners or ex-partners, (compared to 1,191,000 women) (Smith et al, 2012).
- An estimated 603,000 men experienced one or more incidents of partner abuse in England and Wales in the last year (compared to 938,000 women) (Smith et al, 2012).
- An estimated 2.3 million men and 4.3 million women in England and Wales have ever experienced one or more incidents of partner abuse since the age of 16 (Smith et al, 2012)
- There was little variation between risks for married and unmarried men, with no statistically significant risk associated with separation for men (Smith et al, 2012).
- Disabled and mentally ill men were at greater risk than non disabled men (Smith et al, 2012).

Scotland

- 14% of women in Scotland who had a partner since the age of 16 experienced physical partner abuse since that age compared with 10% of men (Scottish Crime Survey, 2012)
- There was no change in the levels of partner abuse reported to the 2010-2011 survey from the previous year
- Young people aged 16 - 24 were at the greatest risk of partner abuse in the last year.
- There was no difference between the levels of partner abuse in the last year reported by men or women.

Type of abuse

England and Wales

- 37% of male victims in England and Wales (approximately 170,200 men) experienced some kind of physical assault (compared to approximately 307,200 women). 5% of them experienced threats (Smith et al, 2012). The England and Wales survey did not provide detail of the nature of this abuse.

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- Women are the majority of victims of sexual assault, threats, physical violence and chronic long term violence (Smith et al, 2012).

Scotland

- The main forms of physical abuse to men and to women reported to the Scottish Survey included a partner throwing something at them (8% of adults who had a partner since that age experienced this); kicking, biting or hitting them (6%) or pushing or holding them down (6%) (Scottish Crime Survey).

Perpetrators

The BCS does not present data on perpetrators. However, the Scottish Survey says that:

- In 61% of cases where partner abuse was experienced since the age of 16, the gender of the abusive partner was male compared with 37% where the gender of the abusive partner was female (Scottish Crime Survey, 2012);
- Among those who had experienced partner abuse in the last 12 months, in the most recent / only incident, 54% of offenders were male and 39% female (Scottish Crime Survey, 2012).
- The majority (69%) of adults who had experienced either psychological or physical partner abuse had just one abusive partner in that time (this data was not disaggregated by gender). 24% had more than one abusive partner since that age. The remainder said they did not know or could not remember how many abusive partners they had (2%) or did not wish to answer (5%) (Scottish Crime Survey, 2012).

Intimate partner homicide

The risk of being a victim of homicide in England and Wales remains low and has been falling for the last decade. There were a total of 435 male homicide victims and 201 female homicide victims in this year, making total of 11.5 victims per million of the population (Smith et al, 2012).

Most male and female victims were killed by someone they knew (78% of female victims and 54% of male victims). However, female victims were more likely to be killed by a partner or ex-partner, male victims by a friend or acquaintance (Smith et al, 2012).

5% of male victims of homicide were killed by a partner or ex-partner (21 men), compared to 53% of female victims of homicide (93 women) (Smith et al, 2012).

The BCS is not able to identify which of these victims were killed by someone who had been using ongoing domestic abuse and which by someone whom they had been abusing in self-defence (Smith et al, 2012).

Incidence and impact

Questions about incidence (amount of abuse) were not explored in the most recent British Crime Surveys. For details of the incidence and impact of abuse in England and Wales, the British Crime Survey for 2004-5 is the last time this information was provided. However, the most recent Scottish Survey contains similar questions about impact to those included in the 2004-5 BCS (Walby and Allan, 2005).

Respect staff have responded each year to consultations by the Home Office on what should be included in the data on intimate violence with strong requests for the section on incidence and impact to be included once more, and for data to be presented more clearly. Other domestic violence organisations and researchers have made the same request.

From the 2010-2011 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey:

- 65% of women who had experienced partner abuse (psychological or physical) in the last 12 months reported at least one psychological impact of the most recent or only incident of abuse compared with 45% of men.
- Women who had experienced partner abuse in the last twelve months were more likely than men to report impacts, summarised as follows:
- Psychological or emotional problems such as difficulty sleeping, nightmares, depression or low self-esteem (42% women; 28% men);
- Stopping trusting people or having difficulty with other relationships (26% women; 14% men);
- Fear, anxiety and panic attacks (28% women; 10% of men);
- Isolation from family and friends (21% women; 10% men).
- Men (45%) were more likely than women (27%) to say they experienced none of the listed psychological effects.

From the data for the 2004-5 BCS on intimate violence in England and Wales (Walby and Allan, 2005):

- 50% of male victims of violence from a partner had experienced the violence for less than one month in total, (compared with 32% of female victims). For long term abuse, 23% of the male victims experienced abuse for between one and six years, compared with 39% of the female victims.
- The majority of long term victims of repeat victimisation from a partner or ex-partner are female.

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- 48% of male victims and 58% of female victims had experienced injuries or emotional effects as a result of the abuse. 16% of male victims and 21% of female victims reported having experienced minor bruising or a black eye.
- 14% of male victims and 33% of female victims had experienced mental or emotional problems as a result of the abuse, 9% of male victims and 15% of female victims stopped trusting people or had difficulty in other relationships.
- 24% of male victims said that they had remained with their abusive partner (compared with 11% of women).
- 9% of male victims said that the abuse only STARTED at the end of the relationship (compared with 5% of female victims).

7.2 Information from other research on gender and domestic violence

The UK Crime Surveys are currently the only national data sets we have for measuring the extent and scale of domestic and intimate partner violence. However, other less large-scale research helps us to understand more about the detail. This section explores the detail of the differences between men's and women's experiences and use of abuse, in order to inform how services develop appropriately to meet those different needs.

Men and women tend to use and/or experience violence and describe it in different ways (Hester, 2009). This has implications for services helping male victims, some of which are further explored in the section below on analysis of the calls to the Men's Advice Line for male victims.

When women use violence in intimate relationships it is often, though not always, in self defence or defence of a child or as a form of resistance (Kimmel, 2002; Dasgupta, 2001; DeKeseredy and Schwarz, various; Healey et al, 1998). However, it is also clear that some women systematically and intentionally perpetrate domestic violence against their male partners (Hester, 2009).

Some researchers strongly assert that men and women abuse in equal numbers (Dixon and Graham-Kevan, 2012; Dutton, 2007; Archer, 2000) Others identify different categories of domestic violence such as so-called 'situational couple violence' and 'intimate partner violence', and that the latter is strongly gendered whilst the former is not so clearly gendered (Johnson, 2005). Dutton also argues that mental health and childhood trauma are stronger predictors of perpetration of domestic violence than gender (Dutton, 2007).

However, national studies such as the England and Wales Crime Survey and the Scottish Crime Survey show differences in experiences of homicide, sexual assault, post-separation abuse and rates of ongoing violence between men and women (see above). This strongly suggests that whilst gender does not explain everything, it still affects the amount and the nature of the services provided for men and for women.

The connections between gender and domestic abuse also include the gender of the perpetrator, often assumed to be female if the victim is male. The 'Day to Count' national snapshot of reported domestic violence on one day found that disproportionate numbers of men reporting domestic violence had been abused by a male partner or ex-partner (Stanko, 2002).

Given that the majority of perpetrators are male and that perpetrators are often prone to manipulation or minimisation of the violence they have used, practitioners are rightly concerned that they may be approached by men who present as victims but are in fact perpetrators. Evidence from current male victims' services confirms that this happens. A significant number of men calling the Men's Advice Line who initially identify as victims change their own identification by the end of the call or provide information about the violence in their relationships which strongly suggests that they are either not a victim

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or in fact are the perpetrator (see elsewhere in this toolkit). This signifies a more complex situation than that initially presented. Clearly practitioners want to be able to prioritise their time helping genuine male victims. They are also concerned that they don't make situations more dangerous for the partners of men who present as victims but are actually perpetrators.

Given the emphasis in the last few decades on protection for women, it is important for male victims to know that they too can ask for and receive help and protection. Men calling the Men's Advice Line are often concerned that if they call the police they won't be taken seriously or that their female partner is less likely to be arrested than they are. Indeed, some state that they have had that experience. However, research on police arrests and use of violence by men and women in the North East of England showed the opposite: women who use violence are more likely than men who use violence to be arrested by the police (Hester, 2009). Practitioners can reassure male victims that they can ask the police for help and should be given protection when they do.

The Hester research in the North East further shows that women are also likely to be arrested when they use violence as a means of defence or resistance and that when women do use violence, they are also more likely than men to use a weapon, such as a household implement, if they are physically violent. Again, this will include women using violence as self-defence as well as violence as a perpetrator: however, in both cases, this will increase the risk of harm to their partner and to themselves. Safety planning with both victim and perpetrator are important for the protection of both adults and of their children. This is part of why the Men's Advice Line continues to give safety planning advice to all callers involved in violent relationships, whether they are clearly victim or not.

Male victimisation also includes abuse in same-sex relationships which can include behaviour specific to this client group. Male victims of domestic violence from a male partner often experience specific forms of abuse such as threats to reveal sexuality to family or colleagues (Sookias, 2008). Anecdotal evidence from calls on the Men's Advice Line shows that gay men often experience higher levels of physical and sexual violence than heterosexual men. Monitoring data from the Men's Advice Line demonstrates higher levels of sexual violence against gay men from a male perpetrator than against heterosexual men from a female perpetrator (see the relevant section in the Toolkit with analysis of sexual abuse experiences reported by men to the Men's Advice Line). Further more detailed specific research on this topic would help to inform risk assessment and management with male victims.

Gender of course does not explain everything and nor is it the only risk factor for domestic abuse. Acknowledging the connections between gender and partner abuse does not mean ignoring other factors, such as mental health or stress (Debonnaire and Todd, 2012). Work with individual victims to support and protect them will usually focus on safety planning, legal and practical help more than on understanding the impact of gender. However, long term work with victims and perpetrators is likely to include exploration of how gender roles affect expectations of behaviour in relationships, partly because men and women bring up these topics themselves (Debonnaire and Todd, 2012).

Conclusions

Men and women can both be victims of domestic violence and abuse. There are differences in the scale, incidence and effects of domestic violence related to whether the victim is a man or a woman. Women are more likely than men to experience domestic violence in general, to experience sexual assault and threats in particular, to experience domestic violence in the long term and to be injured or killed by their partner or ex-partner. However, there are male victims who are abused by either a male or a female partner. They need and are entitled to protection under the law, with practical and emotional help when needed. This is why Respect runs the Men's Advice Line and it is probably why your organisation is also helping male victims. However, the differences as well as the similarities are important for us to consider if we are going to help men effectively.

In some couples, both parties are using violence. However, it is often the case that one is using violence to defend themselves or the children, or as a means of resistance. In any case, there are risks for both adults and for children witnessing the violence. The appropriate responses will be more effective if the practitioners understand who is doing what to whom and with what consequences. For example, responding to a victim who has used violence in self defence will not be the same as responding to someone who is the perpetrator. It is therefore very important, when both parties are using violence, to assess clearly who is the perpetrator and who is the victim using violent resistance, self defence or some other form of violence, in the interests of all adults and children involved.

There is still debate and sometimes controversy about how gender and intimate partner violence and domestic violence are linked. We have tried to represent a summary of this and have provided a short list of further reading in Chapter 8 which includes research from different viewpoints. Our experience on the Men's Advice Line and our reading of the current research is that gender and domestic/intimate partner violence are linked and that it is important to consider how gender affects experiences of abuse. However, we must stress that gender is not the only factor nor is it the only determinant of risk.

In all cases, for male and female victims, listening to what they say and exploring with them what they need is critical. We can then provide really effective help for all victims.

Bibliography – is contained in chapter 8

7.3 Analysis of monitoring of calls to the Men's Advice Line in 2010 and 2011

Introduction

The provision of specialist work with male victims of domestic violence is relatively new in the UK. One of the key sources of information about the experiences of male victims, the ways in which men describe and make sense of their experiences, the needs they have and the process by which workers identify these needs is the Men's Advice Line. This service, run by Respect, provides a telephone advice and support service for male victims of domestic violence. It also provides training, advice and support for projects and professionals working with male victims across the UK and beyond.

In order to provide a rigorous basis for the approaches outlined in the toolkit for work with male victims, the helpline staff and the Respect Research Manager developed an online database to record details of calls in real-time, during the call. We did this by carrying out a preliminary monitoring exercise for three months in 2009, the results of which were published in the first edition of the Male Victims' Toolkit. From this preliminary monitoring we developed an online database for recording details of calls in real time. This allows Helpline workers to identify commonly asked questions and responses and to develop a system for recording them which worked with the flow of most calls, allowing helpline workers to click on responses as they applied, during the call or immediately afterwards.

The results of this monitoring provide a helpful picture of who approaches services for male victims, the types of problems they present with and the ways professionals can start to help clients, even in a fairly short initial intervention. Whilst many projects will go on to work with male victims beyond the first initial phone call or meeting, the information gathered in this first session is usually extremely helpful for guiding the professional beyond this session.

The monitoring analysis presented in this second edition of the toolkit uses the results of the over 5,000 calls taken during 2010 and 2011.

Aims of the monitoring

1. To record how callers identify themselves at the start of the call to the Men's Advice Line (as victims, professionals, friends and family, perpetrators, etc)
2. To identify the specific forms of help, advice, referral etc requested and provided
3. To analyse the gender, age, ethnicity of callers
4. To identify any shift in callers' own analysis of their situation as a result of the call
5. To identify what conclusions helpline workers came to about the caller and how they came to that conclusion
6. To identify the extent to which callers and workers agreed about the nature of their situation, by the end of the call

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- To explore some of the possible explanations for changes in identification and the differences between caller and worker identification of the situation by the end of the call

Findings from the monitoring exercise

Men identifying as victims of domestic violence

KEY FINDING: 60% of the callers to the Men's Advice Line are from men initially identifying as victims of domestic violence, 20% from professionals working with them and the remainder are people in a range of related situations, crisis and need.

The majority of the callers identifying as victims are male (2,903 in this two year period). Very few men initially identify themselves as in a mutually violent relationship. A small number identify as perpetrators of domestic violence.

The following table shows how the callers to the Men's Advice Line presented initially, by gender.

CALLS 2010-2011	Gender				Grand Total
	-	Female	Male	Not known	
-	36	4	77	0	117
Victim of dv	71	75	2,903	0	3,049
Family/friend of perpetrator	4	14	10	0	28
Family/friend of victim	32	293	100	0	425
Mutual violence	1	1	33	0	35
NA-Call back	5	3	46	0	54
Not abuse related	4	5	142	0	151
Perpetrator	6	4	149	0	159
Professional	144	666	206	0	1,016
Student re dv	3	13	4	0	20
OTHER	23	36	100	1	160
Grand Total	329	1,114	3,770	1	5,214

Sexuality of male victims calling the Men’s Advice Line

The majority of men identifying as victims are heterosexual (2,172). 131 in this time period identified as gay, 8 as bisexual, out of a total of 2,311 male victims who gave information about sexuality.

Country	Sexuality					Grand Total
	-	Hetero	Gay	Bisexual	Declined to answer	
-	57	90	7	0	0	154
England	462	1,874	112	6	1	2,455
Northern Ireland	3	10	1	0	0	14
OTHER	2	6	0	0	0	8
Scotland	44	143	3	1	0	191
Wales	23	49	8	1	0	81
Grand Total	591	2,172	131	8	1	2,903

This means that of the men who gave information about sexuality, 94% of them identified as heterosexual and the rest as gay or bisexual.

Age of male victims calling the Men’s Advice Line

Helpline workers asked about age of male victims in all but 306 of the 2,903 calls from male victims to the Men’s Advice Line in this two year period. A very few (14) were under 18. Helpline workers will support young callers at risk of violence to call a more suitable service, such as ChildLine or the local authority social services. A few (130) are over 60. As shown in the table below, male victims calling the Men’s Advice Line are mostly in their 30s and 40s – nearly 1800 men who identified as victims (60% of victims) were 31 – 50.

Age	Number of callers
-	243
under 18	14
18 - 21	30
22 - 30	391
31 - 40	931
41 - 50	854
51 - 60	310
61 - 70	100
over 70	30
Grand Total	2903

Ethnicity

Helpline workers attempt to record ethnicity for all callers who identify themselves as a victim, perpetrator or in an unhappy relationship. They use a pre-set list of the categories used by the UK Census (Main categories and sub-categories). In a few cases the dynamics of the call mean that they are unable to ask. The results are shown below.

KEY FINDING: Nearly 60% of the callers identified themselves as white, over 25% are from an ethnic minority and the rest are not known.

Ethnicity of men calling as victims of domestic violence, 2010-11		
Ethnicity	No of callers	% of male victims
White	1807	62%
Asian	389	13%
Black	376	13%
Mixed race	34	1%
Other	64	2%
Not given	233	8%
TOTAL	2903	

How did helpline workers identify callers by the end of the call?

By the end of the call, based on the evidence provided by the man during the call (see below for more information about how this is gathered), helpline staff identified which of the categories of clients they believed the man belonged to, based on what he had said during the call. If this felt appropriate and likely to be helpful to the caller, they reflected this back to him. In some cases this would not be appropriate or might be unsafe for the callers' partners. However, in almost all cases, the helpline workers recorded the conclusions they came to about his identification.

Of the **2,903 men who initially appeared to identify themselves as victims** of domestic violence, the helpline workers thought:

Worker final dv category identification of men initially identifying as victims		% of men initially identifying as victims
-	36	1%
Victim	1,247	43%
Victim who has used violent resistance	231	8%
Perpetrator	298	10%

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Worker final dv category identification of men initially identifying as victims		% of men initially identifying as victims
Perpetrator whose victim used violent resistance	180	6%
Mutual violence	42	1.4%
Professional	1	0.03%
Friends and family	1	0.03%
Unhappy relationship no abuse	374	13%
Not sure	369	13%
OTHER	124	4%
Grand Total	2,903	

This means that in about half of the cases where the man initially appeared to identify as a victim of domestic violence, the worker agreed, based on the evidence the man gave in the phone call, that he was a victim (see below). For the rest, a very few had been wrongly identified initially as victims when they were actually a professional or a friend or family member of a victim. Most of the rest, from the things they said during the call, did not appear to be victims but were instead either in a non-abusive but unhappy relationship, or were the perpetrator in the relationship. In some of the latter cases, the caller was a perpetrator whose victim had used some form of violent resistance.

Evidence for worker conclusion

Workers make conclusions about the caller based on:

- Injury – to self, to others
- Experience of physical assault
- Fear and feelings of control
- Descriptions of emotional abuse
- Use of physical assault on partner
- Descriptions of partner feeling in fear or controlled
- Descriptions of recent incidents

In about half of the calls from men identifying as victims the men described experiencing physical assault, often assaults which could have or did result in injury to them.

In over 200 of the calls the men had been bitten by their partner. In ten calls the men had experienced burns. In over 50 calls the men had experienced their partner's hands around their throats.

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In almost all the calls reporting physical violence the men described being hit, kicked or punched.

Helpline workers recorded men as victims if they appear to have experienced fear, control, injury, physical assault and identifiable emotional or sexual abuse.

However, in about half of the calls from men identifying as victims they had experienced no physical or sexual assault and did not describe being in fear or feeling controlled. There were no obvious risk factors and questioning the caller sometimes resulted in the caller describing incidents in which their partner was injured by them.

Many of these many described what they identified as emotional abuse, but did not appear to be part of the constellation of abusive behaviours used in the Helpline's model of work and understanding of domestic violence. Neither did these men appear to be afraid of or feel controlled by their partner. Sometimes they describe arguments and unhappiness in the relationship which, whilst not pleasant, do not appear to be abusive, controlling or violent, or part of an overall pattern of coercive control.

Example:

Mark emailed the Men's Advice Line saying 'I think that I am being verbally and emotionally abused by my partner'. He then provided a lengthy description of incidents which he identified as abusive. These included partner criticising him for not getting a job, not wanting to be in the same room as him, wanting to spend more time with her friends than with him, arguments about his lack of employment. He describes being 'moaned at' and criticised for the ways he does things. His partner tells him she doesn't love him. From the lengthy and very detailed description Mark gives, it does appear that the relationship is unhappy and not working well. It does not appear that the things his partner says are stopping Mark from doing anything he wants to do, or making him do things his partner does want him to do – in fact, his description includes many incidents in which he doesn't do what she wants and she criticises him for this. There are no allegations of any violence, he does not appear in any way fearful and he does not seem to be controlled.

This may be unpleasant or difficult to live with, but the evidence from Mark's lengthy statement does not show that this relationship is abusive.

Whilst it is important to listen to what clients say respectfully and in a believing manner, this does not mean that they are always correct in identifying a relationship as abusive. A useful parallel may be to think of a person who goes to the doctor with a list of symptoms, a self-diagnosis of the cause and a specific request for a certain treatment they have read about on the internet. The doctor,

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with expertise and experience, can listen respectfully to the patient but also use their expertise to make a more correct diagnosis or recommend specific tests to explore the condition further. The doctor has to prioritise treating all their patients appropriately and not use up valuable time on patients who do not need treatment, or recommend treatment which is not appropriate, simply because the patient has asked for them.

Domestic violence practitioners have specialist knowledge, training and experience. They can believe and show they believe that the person they are trying to help has their own perceptions of the situation and respectfully carry out an assessment and come to a professional, evidence-based conclusion about the situation and the person's needs.

How did callers identify themselves by the end of the call and how had this changed from initial identification as a victim?

2,903 men initially identified themselves as male victims. As shown above, the workers on the helpline often identified them in another category by the end of the phone call. In some, but not all, of these cases, the men themselves shifted how they identified themselves by the end of the phone call. The majority of callers initially identifying as victims remained with this identification by the end of the call (2,464, 85% of those initially identifying as victims). However, 15% (439 men) had shifted: some to identifying their relationship as unhappy but not abusive (201 men, about 100 each year), some to identifying themselves as the perpetrator (90 men, 45 each year) and some to identifying as in a mutually violent relationship (36 men, about 18 each year). The rest had no clear identification.

Shifts in callers' perceptions of their own situation by the end of the call: men initially presenting as victims		
Caller final identification	Grand total	% of men initially identifying as victims
-	43	1.5%
Friend/family of victim	1	0.05%
Mutual violence	36	1%
OTHER	67	2%
Perpetrator	90	3%
Professional	1	0.05%
Unhappy relationship	201	7%
Victim	2,464	85%
Grand Total	2,903	100

How and why do some men change their own identification as a victim?

Project workers working with male victims of domestic violence have a range of techniques for encouraging men to consider their situation. These include:

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- Reflection what the man has just said
- Commenting that the description of an incident sounded like it would be frightening for his partner and asking him what he thinks about that
- Using the phrase 'some people might think that...' in order to provide a further comment and again asking him what he thinks
- Asking how he thinks his partner felt about the situation
- Asking how he thinks his partner would describe the situation

Helpline staff work with the assumption that a man asking for help as a domestic violence victim is a victim unless his story indicates otherwise. They don't expect or require callers to prove their victim status as a pre condition to providing them with advice and information. They start with a default assumption that someone who says they are a victim is a victim. Workers use a questioning rather than challenging tone and approach in most situations. They only ask or comment in these ways if they feel that the evidence the man has described so far warrant this. During an evaluation of customer satisfaction of callers to the Men's Advice Line in 2008, men commented that they felt believed and supported.

In response to some of these reflections or comments, some men appear to make connections which help them to identify some of the negative effects of their own behaviour. In other cases the men will resist this. It is possible that this resistance is temporary and that having been given things to think about, as well as advice about how to protect themselves from violence, they will consider the effects of their own violence. However, helpline staff provide information about safety planning and other relevant advice to all men who ask for this or appear to need this.

Why the differences?

There are various possible explanations for the discrepancies between how the caller initially presented and the conclusion the worker came to by the end of the call and those in which the caller themselves changed their own identification as victim or otherwise by the end of the call. These include:

- Caller identifying behaviours as abusive which the Men's Advice Line policy would not identify as abusive – these are likely to indicate an unhappy relationship with no abuse
- Caller had been presenting as a victim when they were not – more likely to be a perpetrator, including those perpetrators whose victim has used violent resistance
- Worker misunderstanding what the caller was saying
- Lack of sufficient evidence to reach a likely conclusion

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- Internally confused evidence – which can often happen when a victim is still in shock or very upset about what has happened.

Some calls and emails to the helpline include descriptions of behaviour which the caller identified as abusive but which the helpline model of work and common definitions of domestic violence would not identify as abusive. These include, for example, a failure to make dinner and an insistence on a particular type of fruit juice. These are very similar to reasons given by some male perpetrators for their use of violence and abuse. They indicate the same strength of sense of entitlement to expect certain forms of behaviour from their partner and the same sense of outrage that these expected needs were not met.

These men perceive themselves to be abused and are therefore identified as such on the record of initial monitoring and possibly sometimes in the official monitoring of the call, but the evidence from the caller's own descriptions strongly indicates that they are not victims or that there is no domestic violence, but an unhappy relationship that's breaking down. This would account for some of the differences.

It is worth considering whether or not callers appeared to change their minds only because they felt it was what the helpline worker wanted or because they felt pressured into this. The 2008 evaluation also strongly suggests that helpline staff do not pressure callers. Early in 2008, a random sample of men who called the helpline were interviewed about their experiences. Almost all said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the response they received and that they felt better as a direct result of the call to the line. Some who were called agreed that the worker's final conclusion that they were not a victim was correct.

It is also possible that some of the men who were finally identified as male victims had deliberately withheld information or lied about incidents such that there were finally identified as victims when they were in fact perpetrators. However, the helpline workers aim to reach their conclusions about appropriate responses based on what the man is telling them.

KEY FINDING: Workers ask questions to find out more in order to help all callers appropriately.

Requests and suggestions for further help for callers

Workers responded to requests for information and offered specific information which they thought might be relevant for the caller. In a few cases, information requested could not be provided because it was not available. Staff always try to provide information that callers ask for. The totals below do not add up to 2,903 as many callers are provided with information about more than one service.

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Type of referral given	Number	% male victims (2,903)
Legal	937	32.28
Counselling	546	18.81
Police	512	17.64
Housing	357	12.30
GP	276	9.51
Parenting support	171	5.89
DVPP/RPL	159	5.48
Social Services	111	3.82
Local Male DV service/ IDVA	55	1.89
LGBT	45	1.55
Debt	32	1.10
Drug and alcohol	22	0.76
Refuge	16	0.55

Legal advice, housing and counselling were the most commonly requested forms of help. However, it is worth noticing that more of these men, who initially identified as victims, wanted information about perpetrator programmes by the end of the call than wanted information about men's refuges. This could be for all sorts of reasons, including that there are so few men's refuges that the travelling distance this therefore requires puts many men off. However, it could also be that men just very rarely want this type of specialist support. It could also be that male victims do not perceive themselves to be at great risk. Further research would help us to understand these apparent differences between the needs of male and female victims. **However, even at this early stage with tentative evidence it is worth noticing that we serve male victims better and more effectively if we do not assume that their needs will be identical to female victims.**

Staff identified and provided further advice beyond that requested, when the evidence demonstrated that this could be useful for the caller.

Part of the work of the staff responding to male victims is to be able to identify services and help they might benefit from but which they have not requested. Victims of domestic violence often do not know what is available. It is clearly important that the staff responding to them have good knowledge of the range of available forms of help and protection.

It is important to note that helpline staff, mindful that they could not be sure of the full situation, provide information to men about protection and safety from domestic violence to callers even when they suspect that they may also be using violence. However, this is provided in the course of a call in which they also ask callers questions to help them to consider their situation in new ways, which in some cases, as identified above, results in the caller themselves recognising they too or they alone are using abuse and violence.

Conclusions

All callers and clients deserve and should receive respect and an effective response. In a project funded to support male victims, it is important to prioritise genuine victims and also to help others to get appropriate help. This includes helping men in unhappy but non abusive relationships to have information about legal help, for example. It also includes helping men who are perpetrators to recognise their own behaviour, motivate them to want to change this and consider the help available for them to change.

Interventions start with the first call or conversation – even by asking questions to find out more, the situation is starting to shift in some ways. The response the man gets on the first call is critical for motivating him to feel that there is hope and help available.

The majority of men approaching the Men's Advice Line identify as male victims and are still identifying as male victims by the end of the call and are provided with appropriate help for how to seek protection and legal support for domestic violence.

Legal, housing and counselling services are the most commonly provided types of referral. Very few men want refuge space, a few more want information about perpetrator programmes.

A significant minority of men who initially identify as victims change their own opinion of their situation by the end of the conversation, through the use of carefully chosen questions and reflection by the helpline staff, which provide men with the opportunity to reflect on their relationship and their own understanding of abuse as it applies to their relationship.

There are specific questions which staff can ask about which will provide them with a great deal of information from the man about his situation. Other agencies working with men over a longer time or receiving information from a referring or other agency could explore the evidence in more detail.

During the course of a relatively short conversation, men provide a great deal of information in response to the questions put to them, which help staff to make an initial assessment of who is doing what to whom and with what consequences. This helps to guide their response. This will include providing information about legal and other rights and support services. It will also help to inform them about when it is appropriate to ask a man to consider some of the effects of his behaviour on his partner or to challenge him more directly.

Helpline staff provide information about protection and legalities when requested even if by a man whose descriptions do not appear to be of an abusive relationship and they proactively provide this information in many cases when not explicitly asked. This is important as the information is publicly available elsewhere and workers cannot be sure that their own analysis of the situation is correct. Victims may not always be obvious and need correct information.

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Staff responding to male victims need to be familiar with the range of legal rights and support services available and be able to describe these and to use a range of sources of information to help them keep this information up to date.

If staff have a longer time to talk with the man and to work with him over more than one session, they will be able to use longer and more detailed assessment processes and provide more specifically relevant information or support. The longer assessment tools developed by the Respect Male Victims' Development Worker and piloted in two London boroughs are useful for this process.

KEY FINDING: From our helpline data from nearly 3000 male victims it seems that men do not have the same needs as female victims. It would not be helpful for male victims simply to replicate the services or ways of helping female victims – projects working with male victims need to continue to monitor male victims' needs and ways of presenting for help, in order to help them best and to make best use of our resources.

7.4 Reports of sexual abuse experiences on the Men’s Advice Line from heterosexual and gay men
Qualitative and quantitative differences as reported to the Men’s Advice Line in 2010 and 2011

This report is looking at behaviours as reported by male callers to Men’s Advice Line staff. The comparisons below are limited to the behaviours reported and the report is not aiming to examine impact of these behaviours on the callers.

Men’s Advice Line staff understand the reluctance and embarrassment of men to report experiencing sexual abuse. We also know that in some cases men are unaware that some of their experiences can be classified as sexual abuse. It is very likely that men under-report sexual abuse experiences. The data presented below should be read with this provision in mind and it is likely that more men, gay and heterosexual, experience sexual abuse by their current or ex-partners.

Sexuality of men calling the Men’s Advice Line

In 2010 and 2011 the Men’s Advice Line spoke to 2,903 men who described themselves as domestic violence victims from a current or ex-partner. Most were asked for their own identification of their sexuality and this is recorded in the database. The figures for callers identifying as male victims, calling in 2010 and 2011, broken down by country of residence and sexuality, are as follows:

Country	-	Hetero	Gay	Bisexual	Declined to answer	
-	57	90	7	0	0	154
England	462	1,874	112	6	1	2,455
Northern Ireland	3	10	1	0	0	14
OTHER	2	6	0	0	0	8
Scotland	44	143	3	1	0	191
Wales	23	49	8	1	0	81
Grand Total	591	2,172	131	8	1	2,903

Definitions

The Men’s Advice Line database offers helpline workers the option of recording various types of sexually abusive behaviours. Rape is included in this list – and helpline workers interpret this as sex which is forced, regardless of the gender of the perpetrator. Legally, the act of forced penetrative sex is only defined as rape when the perpetrator is male or, if female, if they are using the penis of another man to penetrate the victim.

Other forced sexual activity is legally defined as sexual assault if there is force, violence or threats involved.

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One-off incidents of non physical sexually abusive behaviour are not illegal – such as verbal abuse of sexual performance, sulking if partner does not want to have sex, making partner feel bad or inadequate for not wanting sex. However, if persistent, this could become harassment, which is a crime.

We have analysed the findings for men defining as heterosexual and men defining as gay, on the assumption that the perpetrator in each of these cases was their partner or ex-partner.

We have also analysed the experiences men describe under two broad headings.

'sexual abuse of a physical nature' includes: rape, being hurt during sex, forced to have sex with other people; inappropriate/unwanted touching, not informed of a sexually transmitted infection and having unsafe sex without consent.

'sexual abuse of a non-physical nature' includes: being mocked for sexual performance; pressure to have sex; sulking if partner doesn't want to have sex; made to watch porn.

We are aware that there are opportunities here for error or misunderstanding in our recording of the various forms of sexually abusive behaviours as well as under-counting due to men not wanting to talk about sexual abuse or not recognising sexual abuse.

KEY FINDINGS

Almost 1 in 3 gay men (29.3%) and 1 in 25 heterosexual men (4%) who called the Men's Advice Line reported having experienced some type of sexual abuse

34% of gay men who reported having experienced some type of sexual abuse told us they had been raped by their male (ex) partner; that's 17% of all gay men calling the helpline

Information extracted from the Men's Advice Line database shows that gay male victims tend to report sexual abuse experiences more often than heterosexual men. They also report experiencing rape more often than heterosexual men.

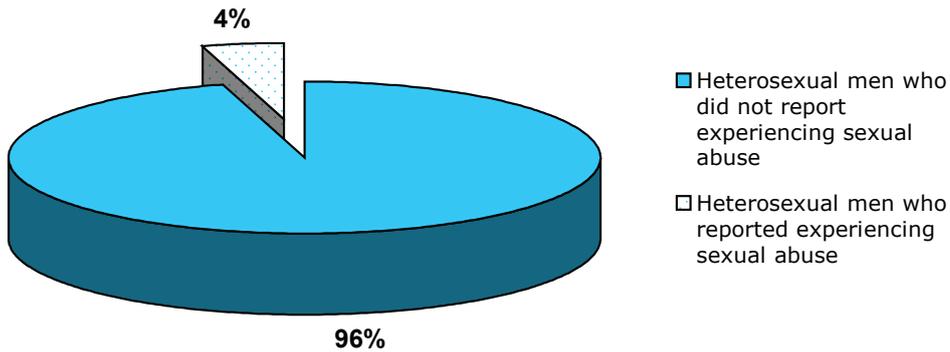
Respect Toolkit for work with male victims of domestic violence

Sexual abuse

Heterosexual men

91 out of 2,172 heterosexual men reported some sexually abusive experiences.

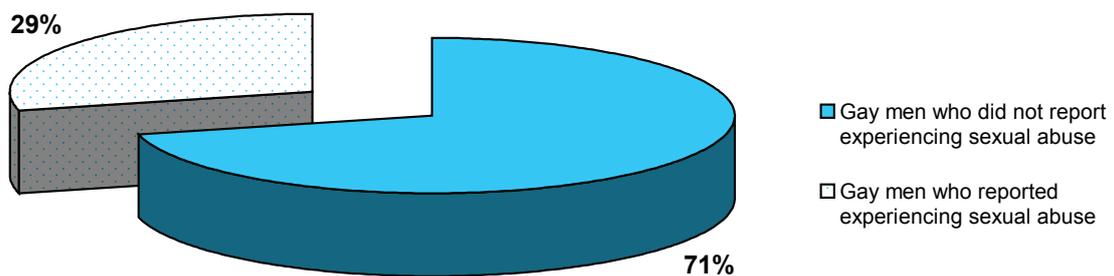
Heterosexual men and sexual abuse



Gay men

38 out of 131 gay men who called the helpline reported some form of sexual abuse.

Gay men and sexual abuse



Gay men are more likely than heterosexual men to report experiencing sexual abuse when they call the Men's Advice Line. It is very likely that gay men experience sexual abuse more frequently than heterosexual men but the limitations of Men's Advice Line data (one-off telephone contact with callers, information given is not verifiable etc) mean that we cannot generalise to the wider population of male victims. However, this trend is significant.

Male victims and forced sex

Heterosexual men

Out of the 91 heterosexual men who reported experiencing sexual abuse 9 told us they had been experienced forced sex: 10% of heterosexual men reporting sexual abuse (or 0.4% of all heterosexual men who called us in 2010-2011).

Gay men

Out of the 38 gay men who reported experiencing sexual abuse 13 told us they had been raped: 34% of all gay male callers who reported sexual abuse (or 17% of all gay men who called us in 2010-2011).

From what the callers tell the Helpline workers, when heterosexual men talk about rape they mean being verbally and emotionally coerced to having sex until they give in and perform the sexual act; rather than being physically forced (pinned down, held down; threatened) to have sex. Helpline workers record acts as rape on the caller database if the caller says they were forced to have sex, even where this is without force or where the abuser was female (and therefore not legally rape).

In contrast, gay men describe the use of physical coercion as part of the act of rape that follows and they are the object of penetrative sex without consent.

Physical versus non-physical types of sexual abuse

There are significant differences between heterosexual and gay men in terms of how they experience sexual abuse: heterosexual men are more likely to experience sexual abuse in non-physical ways, whereas gay men are more likely to experience physical sexually abusive behaviours.

Heterosexual men

91 heterosexual men reported experiencing sexual abuse:

22 out of 91 heterosexual men reported sexual abuse of a physical nature (24%), including: rape, coerced sex, being hurt during sex, inappropriate/unwanted touching, not informed of a sexually transmitted infection, having unsafe sex without consent etc.

69 heterosexual men out of 91 reported experiencing sexual abuse of a non-physical nature only (76% of heterosexual men reporting any sexual abuse), including: being mocked for their sexual performance, pressure to have sex (verbal and emotional pressure, not physical), unwanted sexual demands, partner sulking if she didn't get sex etc.

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Gay men

32 out of 38 gay men reported sexual abuse of a physical nature (84%) including rape, being hurt during sex, inappropriate/unwanted touching, not informed of a sexually transmitted infection, having unsafe sex without consent, being forced to have sex with other people.

6 out of 38 gay men reported sexual abuse of a non-physical nature (16%) including being mocked for their sexual performance, pressure to have sex (verbal and emotional pressure, not physical), unwanted sexual demands, partner sulking if he didn't get sex etc.

Conclusions on sexual abuse experienced by male victims calling the helpline

Sexual abuse appears, from our data, to be much more strongly associated with men being abused by another man than men being abused by a woman. This applies particularly to rape and other sexual assault involving physical violence or force.

Heterosexual men describe sexual abuse which appears to be more emotional or psychological in nature.

It may be that men aren't telling us about sexually abusive experiences. However it may also be that there are significant differences between gay and heterosexual victims.

As we currently do not record the gender of the perpetrator but do record self identified sexuality, there is a small group of callers for which we don't have clear data, men identifying as bisexual. We are considering amending the helpline database in order to explore bisexual men's experiences more clearly and also to ensure that we are capturing clearly information from men who identify as heterosexual but have sex with other men.

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NOTE: web links are given where possible. For further information about obtaining copies of the list research, Respect members may contact the Respect Research manager Thangam.debbonaire@respect.uk.net

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