

Domestic Abuse

Number of cases recorded by police remains around 60,000 a year.

Cabinet Secretary for Justice Humza Yousaf has responded to official statistics showing there were 59,541 domestic abuse incidents recorded by Police Scotland last year – up 1% on 2016-17.

In line with previous years, around four out of every five incidents of domestic abuse had a female victim and a male accused, while the vast majority (88%) occurred in the home, according to the bulletin 'Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland, 2017-18'.

Analysts report that recorded domestic abuse levels have remained relatively stable since 2011-12, with around 58,000 to 60,000 incidents a year.

The Justice Secretary said:

“It is sobering to see the level of domestic abuse cases in Scotland remaining unchanged from previous years. As a society we must work collectively to reduce this number – making clear that such behaviour is unacceptable. This includes educating young people about healthy, positive relationships and challenging those who minimise the impact of abuse or gender-based violence.

“At the same time domestic abuse laws coming into force next year will help police and prosecutors to better-tackle coercive, controlling abuse that can have as devastating an impact as physical assaults. Police Scotland is delivering consistent, robust enforcement across the country which, alongside their disclosure scheme and the new laws, will help ensure there is no hiding place those who think they can continue to abuse partners ‘behind closed doors’.”

Assistant Chief Constable Gillian MacDonald, Crime and Operations lead for Police Scotland, said:

“Domestic Abuse is pernicious, it is destructive, debilitating and robs victims of their confidence and self-esteem, it has no place in modern Scotland. We are committed to working with partners and communities to eradicate it. It has no respect for age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or income. We will relentlessly pursue those who abuse, whilst supporting victims, to help prevent domestic abuse from damaging their lives and those of their families, including children who all too often witness the abuse and suffer long lasting emotional trauma as a result.

“Domestic abuse is not just physical abuse, it can include verbal,

sexual, psychological or financial abuse. It is often about power and control, with abusers using controlling behaviours to establish control over their victims. With this in mind we welcome the enactment of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 which will come into force next year. In preparation, we are providing additional training to our officers and staff on the complexities of psychological abuse and controlling behaviours.

“Anyone reporting abuse to the police will be taken seriously, they will be listened to and their report will be investigated. We will continue to work alongside others in Scotland, including victim support and advocacy services to ensure support is available throughout the criminal justice process, and to keep people and their families safe.”

Background:

- The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill received Royal Assent in March and is expected to come into effect next year. The legislation strengthens the law, including introducing a new offence, effectively criminalising the type of coercive and controlling behaviour that can constitute domestic abuse.
- The Scottish Government has provided funding to Police Scotland for more than 14,000 police officers and support staff to undertake training on the new legislation.
- Work is also underway to design an effective public awareness campaign to ensure that members of the public, including both potential victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse, are aware of the new law and that victims understand how they can report abuse.

The full statistical publication is available [online](#).

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