

Justice Secretary comments on domestic abuse figures

Police dealt with just over 60,000 incidents in 2018-19

Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf has responded to official statistics showing police recorded 60,641 incidents of domestic abuse in 2018-19 – a 2% rise on the previous year.

Levels of domestic abuse recorded by police in Scotland have remained relatively stable since 2011-12, with around 58,000 to 61,000 incidents each year, according to the latest annual bulletin published by Scotland's Chief Statistician.

In 2018-19, 41% of incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in Scotland included the recording of at least one crime or offence. Where gender information was recorded, around four out of every five incidents had a female victim and a male accused.



Cabinet Secretary for Justice Humza Yousaf said:

“Domestic abuse exacts a terrible toll on victims and often causes much wider harms, such as impacting on children’s safety and well-being within the family home.

“While these figures are for the year before our domestic abuse laws came into force, the passage of that legislation in 2018 alongside Police Scotland’s ‘Every 9 minutes’ campaign, helped raise awareness of this insidious crime and its many facets and encouraged people to report their experiences.

“Domestic abuse is neither acceptable nor inevitable. We must work collectively – as parents, friends, co-workers and legislators – to bring an end to this blight on society, address underlying attitudes that enable it to persist, call out those who dismiss or minimise its impact, and ensure that perpetrators are dealt with robustly and effectively.”

Background

A statistical news release, linking to the full statistical publication, can be accessed at:

<https://news.gov.scot/news/domestic-abuse-recorded-by-the-police-in-scotland-2018-19>

In February 2018 the Scottish Parliament passed ground-breaking legislation

criminalising psychological domestic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour, which was brought into force in April 2019. The Domestic Abuse Act provides for prison sentences of up to 14 years and is the only UK legislation with a specific statutory sentencing aggravation to reflect the harm that can be caused to children growing up in an environment where domestic abuse takes place. The Act also requires courts to consider imposing a Non-Harassment Order on an offender convicted of a domestic abuse offence to protect their victim from further abuse and makes a number of other reforms to criminal procedure to protect victims.

The Scottish Government has rolled out the Caledonian System – an accredited, two-year court-mandated, behaviour change programme for men convicted of domestic abuse offences. Around 75% of Scotland’s population now live in local authorities with access to the programme. An evaluation published in 2016 found that women felt safer as a result of a partner or ex-partner undertaking the programme, while men who had completed it posed a lower risk to their families.

The Scottish Government is also supporting the development of the ‘Safe and Together’ framework for partnering with parents experiencing domestic abuse and intervening with perpetrators to enhance the safety and wellbeing of children. Funding has been provided to support work by the Improvement Service and the Safe and Together Institute UK Lead to promote Safe and Together and build momentum at a national and local level.

The Scottish Government has also announced plans to give police and the courts new powers to remove suspected domestic abusers from the homes of victims or others at risk for a period of time, without the need for the person at risk to make an application to the court themselves, through legislation to be introduced during the current Parliamentary session that ends in June 2021.

The Scottish Government supports a range of projects to prevent gender-based violence, including Mentors in Violence Prevention, a bystander programme delivered in schools which aims to empower young people to safely challenge and speak out against bullying, abusive and violent behaviour, as well as the negative attitudes and assumptions which underpin this behaviour.

Official statistics are produced by professionally independent statistical staff – more information on the standards of official statistics in Scotland can be accessed at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/About>

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