

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of grey silhouettes of women's heads and shoulders. The silhouettes are diverse, showing various hairstyles, head coverings like hijabs, and facial features. They are arranged in a grid-like fashion, creating a textured, mosaic-like effect.

‘I thought it was just a part of life’

**Understanding the Scale of Violence
Committed Against Women in the
UK Since Birth**

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Executive Summary

VictimFocus invested in this study to collect accurate data about violent acts committed against women and girls since birth. Our aims were as much about gathering accurate data from women, as they were about what we could do with such a comprehensive dataset. The first aim was to present a clear picture of how much violence women and girls in the UK are subjected to, broken down into types of violence, how many times they had been subjected to it and who committed those acts of violence against them. The second aim has considerable theoretical and practical implications; to explore whether the dataset supported existing theories of violence against women and girls.

Understanding our aims

Women and girls are subjected to violence, abuse, and harassment, but there is much argument about how common this is. For some, the argument is made that women and girls are now equal and do not face oppression, discrimination or abuse for simply being female. Statistics about the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence are frequently contested, or critiqued as being exaggerated or falsified.

This most often happens when statistics are taken from small sample sizes, or from the answers to questions with ambiguous language which could have led to over or under-responding. We sought to address these methodological issues by creating a study which avoided ambiguous or inaccessible language, was easy to complete and had the largest sample size possible within the timeframe.

The second aim relates to several key theories in fields such as psychology, criminology, social work and policing which attempt to explain why women and girls are subjected to violence and abuse. One such theory is ‘vulnerability theory’ – the argument that only certain women and girls with inherent vulnerabilities and risks would be targeted or abused by others (usually men).

This approach to understanding violence against women and girls has led to considerable interventions, programmes, education which lean towards victim blaming. Women and girls are assessed and categorised as vulnerable or putting themselves at risk, and professional responses can often include advice to stop doing things, going to places, wearing certain clothing, behaving in certain ways and thinking or feeling certain ways. Instead of addressing the societal issue of violence against women and girls, male violence, patriarchal norms, gender role stereotypes, lack of prosecution of offenders and several other casual factors, many professionals are instead taught to correct or improve the woman or girl.

We were therefore interested in whether our data would support the idea that only certain groups of women and girls are subjected to violence and abuse. However, our data did not support this theory, instead demonstrating that women and girls from every walk of life have been subjected to violence and abuse in their lives.

Repeat victimisation has interested academics and practitioners for decades, with several theories which seek to explain why some women and girls are subjected to violence repeatedly in their lifetimes. We were interested if this was correct, especially as most women can recount several times that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or abused. This is the reason we asked every woman how many times each offence had been committed against them in childhood, and then again in adulthood.

Several revictimisation theories argue that certain women and girls are repeatedly targeted for abuse, rape or harassment because of something specific about them (low self-esteem, poor communication, low confidence, low self-worth, vulnerabilities, risk taking behaviours and so on). We wanted to use a large dataset to consider whether there were certain groups of women who were much more likely to be repeatedly victimised, but this was not supported by our data either.

Understanding the true scale of violence against women and girls in the UK

We found that 99.7% of our sample had been repeatedly subjected to violence including assaults, harassment and rape. Only 0.3% of women had only been subjected to one violent incident or less.

In total, 22,419 women reported that they had collectively been subjected to at least 808,607 acts of violence including 216,965 physical assaults and 363,964 sexual assaults. In their childhoods, women were collectively subjected to 395,558 acts of violence (49%) and in adulthood, women were subjected to 413,050 acts of violence (51%).

Overall, this meant that of 22,419 women living in the UK, they were all subjected to at least 37 acts of violence each, in their lives since birth.

Our findings in this report suggest that current statistics of the prevalence of violence against women have been underestimated for decades, and instead, it is likely that every woman and girl will be subjected to violence, abuse, rape or harassment. In the vast majority of cases reported here, women were subjected to multiple crimes and the perpetrators were overwhelmingly male.

What can we do with this new data?

There are several important ways to utilise this data, and we hope that it will be considered by academics, government, authorities, police, social care, psychology, national health and mental health services. We will release a specific report this summer which will explore implications for all levels of authority, policy and politics.

In the short term, the most important implication of this report is to change the way we report and talk about violence committed against women and girls as if it is rare, uncommon or only affecting certain groups of women and girls. It is better positioned as a systemic,

global, enduring phenomenon than a set of crimes that are either rare, or precipitated by women and girls' behaviours or characters.

This data should be used to challenge victim blaming, stereotyping of victims, interventions and programmes which seek to pinpoint particular characteristics within a woman or girl to explain why they were subjected to violence, abuse or harm.

It appears from this sample that violence and abuse against women and girls is a universal experience, with only 0.3% of the sample reporting that they had never been subjected to any violence, harassment, abuse or harm.

If this is correct, theories which suggest that only certain women are subjected to violence and abuse, and that these forms of violence against women and girls are rare or exaggerated are shown to be inaccurate and misleading. Instead, the true scale of violence and abuse committed against women and girls sits closer to 100% than any of the conservative estimates of 1 in 4, 1 in 5, or 1 in 20, which have been used for several years.

Recommendations

This is a summary of recommendations which may change or increase when the full report is released in summer 2021.

Police

1. Explore low reporting rates and low confidence rates of women and girls and seek feedback to support systemic change
2. Explore low charging rates of violent crimes against women and girls
3. Invest in updated training and ongoing education of officers and management to increase understanding of the scale of violence against women and girls, and to dispel myths of rarity or vulnerability of women and girls as the cause or solution to these offences
4. Remove any resources, practice tools or assessments which assume that only certain women and girls will be subjected to violence and abuse
5. Remove any resources, practice tools or interventions which encourage women and girls to change their clothing, behaviours, character, lifestyles or personal qualities to 'protect themselves' from violence and abuse
6. Remove reference to old statistics and theories which suggest that violence against women (including rape, sexual abuse, domestic abuse, child sexual abuse and harassment) are uncommon or precipitated by the victim
7. Use the findings of this report to challenge victim blaming and shaming of women and girls subjected to all forms of interpersonal violence

Criminal justice system

1. Explore low prosecution rates for violent crimes against women and girls
2. Explore women and girls' low confidence rates in the criminal justice system and seek feedback to support systemic change
3. Explore how cultures, attitudes and myths about violence against women and girls are impacting the justice process, despite significant evidence to support the enduring prevalence of these crimes
4. Utilise expert witnesses in support of victims, especially those who can dispel myths, misinformation and incorrect narratives about the likelihood of violence against women and girls
5. Ensure that all staff are trained to identify and respond to disclosures, suspicions or reports of violence against women and girls

Education environments

1. Discuss the scale and prevalence of violence against women and girls in age appropriate, accessible and specific terms throughout school, college and university years
2. Ensure that all girls and women in education know where to seek support, how to seek support and what their rights are when they disclose, report or seek help
3. When teaching or discussing violence against women and girls, be specific and clear about what constitutes harassment, abuse, assault, sexual violence, domestic violence and coercion. This means clarifying and listing specific actions, words, behaviours, tactics and controls.
4. Remove and disuse any educational resources about violence or abuse which have victim blaming narratives or messages; especially those which suggest that violence against women and girls is rare, or is precipitated by something about the girl (behaviour, character, background, appearance, lifestyle). This includes those used at secondary schools, colleges and universities
5. Robustly challenge and provide clear consequences for violence committed against girls in school, college and university environments, including but not limited to, sexual comments, sexual harassment, sexual assault, upskirting, making and sharing of images, sexual abuse, domestic abuse within teen relationships, sexism and misogyny
6. Ensure all staff members and management are suitably trained to identify and respond to violence against girls in their school, college and university environments
7. Utilise local specialist women's services to support education and care for girls and women in education environments

Academic topics and research

1. When teaching modules about violence against women and girls, include the findings of this report to explore methodology and results of asking large samples of women about their experiences of violence and abuse
2. Consider updating violence against women prevalence statistics in teaching materials, reading and lecture notes for all students
3. Challenge and critique traditional and influential theories in psychology, criminology, sociology, policing, nursing, counselling and social care which focus on the 'vulnerabilities' of certain groups of women and girls as the cause of victimisation
4. Challenge and critique traditional and influential theories in psychology, criminology, sociology, policing, nursing, counselling and social care which suggest that violence against women and girls is rare, or is precipitated or encouraged by the character, behaviour, appearance or lifestyle of the victim
5. When conducting research into violence against women and girls, consider being specific about the acts of violence and abuse you are researching instead of using broad, inaccessible or professional term that some women and girls may not relate to or understand. (Instead of asking 'have you ever been raped?' consider asking

‘have you ever been forced, deceived or coerced to have sex that you didn’t consent to?’)

6. When conducting research into violence against women and girls which includes scenarios or vignettes, ensure that they contain examples which do not reinforce stereotypes or myths about violence, abuse, rape or harassment
7. When conducting research into violence against women and girls which seeks to identify characteristics, behaviours, appearances, childhood or lifestyles that ‘lead to’ or ‘predispose’ women and girls to being raped, abused, harassed, assaulted or harmed; consider whether this research contributes to victim blaming narratives and individualisation of global violence against women and girls
8. Ensure that all staff are trained to identify and respond to disclosures, suspicions or reports of violence against women and girls (including research participants and students)

Social care

1. Challenge and change current systems which assume that women and girls subjected to violence and abuse are targeted due to vulnerabilities, specific characteristics or risks – and instead work with women and girls as assumed victims of a universal, systemic culture of misogyny and violence against women.
2. Remove any resources, practice tools or assessments which assume that only certain women and girls will be subjected to violence and abuse
3. Remove any resources, practice tools or interventions which encourage women and girls to change their clothing, behaviours, character, lifestyles or personal qualities to ‘protect themselves’ from violence and abuse
4. Remove reference to old statistics and theories which suggest that violence against women (including rape, sexual abuse, domestic abuse, child sexual abuse and harassment) are uncommon or precipitated by the victim
5. Use the findings of this report to challenge victim blaming and shaming of women and girls subjected to all forms of interpersonal violence
6. Challenge and critique any further use of theories or resources which support the concept that only certain women and girls will be repeat victims, revictimised, and/or any resources or tools which refer to a ‘cycle’ or ‘risk taking’ in relation to women and girls who have been subjected to multiple forms of violence
7. Ensure that all staff are trained to identify and respond to disclosures, suspicions or reports of violence against women and girls

Government

1. Consider violence against women and girls to be a universal issue for the entire female half of the population, and address accordingly
2. Consider updating violence against women and girls prevalence statistics in policy, briefings, reports and legislation to reflect how common these crimes are
3. Commit to exploring robust approaches to protecting women and girls from repeated incidents of violence, abuse, harassment, harm and assaults from birth
4. Increase funding and governmental support for women's services which specialise in the support of women and girls subjected to violence and abuse
5. Commit to prioritising solutions, interventions and support for women and girls who have been subjected to violence and abuse since birth
6. Ensure that all staff are trained to identify and respond to disclosures, suspicions or reports of violence against women and girls

Media

1. Consider violence against women and girls to be a universal issue for the entire female half of the population, and discuss, explore and research accordingly
2. Consider updating violence against women and girls prevalence statistics in briefings, reports and articles to reflect how common these crimes are in UK society
3. Remove and disuse journalistic approaches which seek to explain or blame violence against women and girls on their character, behaviour, appearance, lifestyle or childhood
4. Refrain from reporting or framing violence against women and girls as rare, exaggerated or falsified

Health and medical services

1. Ensure that all staff are trained to identify and respond to disclosures, suspicions or reports of violence against women and girls
2. Consider violence against women and girls to be a universal issue for the entire female half of the population, and discuss, explore and practice accordingly
3. Consider updating violence against women and girls prevalence statistics in training materials, reports and guidance for professionals to reflect how common these crimes are in UK society
4. Consider the implications for female patients undergoing any type of procedure (not just those considered to be 'sensitive') who might be distressed, traumatised or triggered by the environment, procedure, experiences, feelings or fears whilst in your care
5. Ensure all women and girls can access female only spaces whilst in healthcare facilities if needed

6. Ensure all women and girls can request chaperones or specify female professionals if needed
7. Consider that the majority of women and girls have been or will be subjected to violence and abuse, and their trauma responses are a normal, natural, justified response to oppression. This means refraining from medicalising or pathologising those responses as mental illnesses, disorders or syndromes

Training of professionals

1. Consider violence against women and girls to be a universal issue for the entire female half of the population, and discuss, explore and teach accordingly
2. Consider updating violence against women and girls prevalence statistics in training materials, reports and guidance for professionals to reflect how common these crimes are in UK society
3. When teaching or discussing violence against women and girls, be specific and clear about what constitutes harassment, abuse, assault, sexual violence, domestic violence and coercion. This means clarifying and listing specific actions, words, behaviours, tactics and controls.
4. Remove and disuse any educational resources about violence or abuse which have victim blaming narratives or messages; especially those which suggest that violence against women and girls is rare, or is precipitated by something about the woman or girl (behaviour, character, background, appearance, lifestyle).
5. Challenge and critique traditional and influential theories in psychology, criminology, sociology, policing, nursing, counselling and social care which focus on the 'vulnerabilities' of certain groups of women and girls as the cause of victimisation
6. Challenge and critique traditional and influential theories in psychology, criminology, sociology, policing, nursing, counselling and social care which suggest that violence against women and girls is rare, or is precipitated or encouraged by the character, behaviour, appearance or lifestyle of the victim
7. Ensure that all staff are trained to identify and respond to disclosures, suspicions or reports of violence against women and girls

Introduction

- Statistics on violence against women and girls are often estimated or extrapolated from smaller sample sizes, or general samples about national crime
- Currently, the UK uses estimations of prevalence for domestic and sexual violence committed against women and girls
- The most accurate data we have in the UK about specific acts of violence against women or girls is the Femicide Census and annual femicide statistics which report the murders of women and girls, the cause of death and in most cases, the perpetrator
- One of the largest sources of annual data in the UK is the Crime Survey England and Wales which recently reported that in the last 12 months, 1 in 40 women had been raped, 1 in 5 had been stalked, and 1 in 10 younger people had been sexually assaulted (CSEW, 2020).
- A recent YouGov study for UN Women focussed on the experiences of over 1000 women in public spaces and found that 7 in 10 women had been sexually harassed, over half had been catcalled, 4 in 10 had been sexually touched, a third had been followed and 1 in 5 had been the victim of indecent exposure (known as ‘flashing’) (UN Women, 2021).

The purpose of this study

- This study was designed to collect more accurate and detailed information about violence committed towards women before in childhood and after 18 years old
- The methodology is different to other studies, which aims to make the data more accurate and easier to respond to for women who took part

There were several purposes to this study, outlined below.

1. To present accurate and detailed data about different kinds of violence committed against women and girls in the UK since they were born
2. To demonstrate the difference in statistics when a more accessible data collection method is utilised to ask women about violent crimes committed against them
3. To explore the relationship between demographics and violence committed against women and girls; specifically common demographics which are employed in victim blaming and discrediting of women who report or disclose violence and abuse. This includes an interrogation of the assumed relationship between being subjected to

violence and factors such as wealth, education, childhood experiences, confidence, family structures, ethnicity, and age.

4. To explore dominant theories that only certain 'types' of women and girls are 'revictimised'. Current theories and practice wisdom assume that only the most 'vulnerable' or 'risk taking' women and girls will be subjected to violence and abuse multiple times.
5. To provide comprehensive data about the perpetrators of different kinds of violence committed against women and girls
6. To explore the reporting and disclosure behaviours and experiences of women and girls subjected to violence and abuse
7. To explore the impact violence and abuse has on women and girls in the UK
8. To explore the validity of, and relationship of ACEs and violence committed against women and girls

Summary of methodology

- An anonymous questionnaire shared on social media platforms between November 2020 and March 2021
- Respondents were required to be women aged 18 and over currently residing in the UK
- Previous studies have shown that when broad terms such as ‘rape’, ‘sexual violence’ and ‘domestic violence’ are used to collect prevalence data, many women do not identify with the terms and do not consider themselves to be victims (Taylor, 2020).
- Studies conducted with children in Sweden demonstrated more accurate data when specific and clear acts of violence were described (e.g., I was kicked or I was threatened) instead of using broader terms (e.g. I was abused) (Eaton and Paterson-Young, 2017).
- Based on these two notable findings, the questionnaire was designed to ask specific questions about incidents of violence, how many times it happened and who committed the act. Broad terms such as ‘abuse’, ‘rape’, ‘sexual violence’, ‘sexual abuse’, ‘domestic violence’, ‘domestic abuse’, ‘honour-based violence’ were avoided in all items to reduce the impact of social constructs of these terms.

The questionnaire was made up of the following sections:

Section	Item type	Item response options
Demographics	Age group Gender identity Sexuality Ethnicity Disability Religion Income group Family type in childhood Education type Education level (highest)	Multiple choice and free text
Adverse childhood experiences	ACE questionnaire	Multiple choice Standardised items
Violence committed against women before age 18	Items containing 13 physical acts of violence such as ‘shoved’, ‘kicked’, ‘hit’, ‘spat at’, ‘choked’, ‘thrown down	Multiple choice options: Never Once 2-3 times

<i>Please note that all of these items are identical and repeated for the section 'violence committed against women after 18'</i>	stairs', 'threatened to kill you'	More than 3 times Free text question for each item: 'Who committed this act against you?'
	Item 'Have you ever reported any of these crimes to the police?'	Multiple choice options: No Yes Some, but not others Other (free text)
	Items containing 13 sexual acts of violence such as 'kissed without consent', 'touched my body inappropriately', 'forced me to watch porn', 'forced me to give oral sex'	Multiple choice options: Never Once 2-3 times More than 3 times Free text question for each item: 'Who committed this act against you?'
	Item 'Have you ever reported any of these crimes to the police?'	Multiple choice options: No Yes Some, but not others Other (free text)
	Items containing 11 further items of of violence such as 'subjected to female genital mutilation', 'forced into a marriage or union', 'received a death threat online', 'received a nude pic from a male'.	Multiple choice options: Never Once 2-3 times More than 3 times Free text question for each item: 'Who committed this act against you?'
	Item 'Have you ever reported any of these crimes to the police?'	Multiple choice options: No Yes Some, but not others Other (free text)

	Item 'Has anyone ever been convicted of any of the crimes committed against you?'	Multiple choice options: Yes No Someone was charged, but not successfully convicted Other (free text)
	Item 'Have you ever disclosed any of the crimes committed against you to anyone else?'	Multiple choice options: Yes No Other (free text)
Experience and disclosure	Item 'If you did report or disclose to someone that you had been subjected to any of these crimes, who did you tell and how did it go? Would you report/disclose if it happened to you again?'	Free text question Essay box provided
	Item 'Do you have any other experiences, comments or views that you would like included in our study anonymously?'	Free text question Essay box provided
The impact on women	A set of 21 statements about experiences, attitudes and feelings about violence against women and girls including self blame, self-confidence, reporting confidence, mental health and impact on self	5 point agreement Likert item response scale Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Data analysis

- All quantitative data was analysed using the integrated analytical software for basic statistics
- All quantitative numerical data was migrated into SPSS to explore advanced statistics and relationships which will be reported in the final report and several other specific reports to explore demographics
- All qualitative data relating to the question 'Who committed this act against you?' was analysed using a basic word frequency count to look for repeated terms such as 'Dad' or 'Partner' or 'Boyfriend'. All perpetrators are reported in the final report.
- All qualitative data was coded using thematic analysis by a team of researchers and this process is ongoing. The qualitative data will be explored in the final report and specific reports in future.

About the sample

- 22,419 women took part (this included 158 non-binary females, 19 transgender women and 3 transgender men)
- Age: 17% were aged 18-25, 25% were aged 26-35, 29% were aged 36-45, 21% were aged 46-55, 7% were aged 56-65, 1% were aged 66-75 and 0% (28 women) were aged over 75
- Ethnicity: 75% of women were White British and 10% of women preferred not to disclose their ethnicity. The remaining 15% of women were from a broad range of ethnicities including African, Asian British, Caribbean, Irish, Greek, Croatian, Turkish, Australian, Polish, German, Filipino, Cypriot, Black British, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Jewish, Traveller/Gypsy, Irish and dual heritage.
- Religious beliefs: 67% of women were atheist (60%) or agnostic (7%). 11% of women were Christian, 4% were ex-religious, 2% were wiccan/pagan, 2% were spiritual, 1% were Muslim, 1% were Jewish, 1% were Buddhist, 1% were unsure, 0.3% were Sikh. A further 7% followed a range of beliefs and religions.
- Education: 42% of women had an undergraduate degree or equivalent, 27% had a Masters degree or equivalent, 10% had A-levels or equivalent, 9% had completed a course at college, 7% had a doctorate or PhD, 4% had completed GCSEs or equivalent, 1% had no qualifications
- Individual annual income from work or benefits: 17% earned £0-10,999, 17% earned £11,000-19,999pa, 23% earned £20,000-29,999pa, 18% earned £30,000-39,999pa, 11% earned £40,000-49,999pa, 8% earned £50,000-69,999, 6% earned over £70,000pa
- Sexuality: 76% of women were heterosexual, 15% of women were bisexual, 4% of women were lesbian, 4% were unsure of their sexuality and 1% were asexual
- Disability: 83% of women did not have a disability, 5% had a physical disability, 3% had multiple disabilities, and 2% had an intellectual disability
- Education type: 78% of women went to state school, 11% went to private school, 8% went to a religious school, 2% went to boarding school

How does our sample compare to the general population?

Generally, the sample is a good representation of the female population in the UK due to sample size, ethnicity and age spread. Our sample was more diverse in ethnicity than the general population. Wealth and education were also higher than in the general population. Non-religious respondents were more common in this sample than in the general population. The majority of respondents were aged less than 56 years old, which is not representative of the general female population.

These are important differences to note, as they may influence the data. However, this will be explored in detail in the final report due out in summer 2021.

Overall findings from 22,419 women

Out of a sample of 22,419 women:

- 99.7% of women had been repeatedly subjected to violence including assaults, harassment and rape.
- 99.3% of women had been repeatedly subjected to sexual violence specifically
- Only 0.3% of women had only been subjected to one violent incident or less.
- 22,419 women reported that they had collectively been subjected to at least 808,607 acts of violence since birth
- This was made up of 216,965 physical assaults and 591,642 sexual assaults.
- In their childhoods, women were collectively subjected to 395,558 acts of violence (49%) and in adulthood, women were subjected to 413,050 acts of violence (51%).
- Overall, this meant that of 22,419 women living in the UK, they were all subjected to at least 37 acts of violence* each, in their lives since birth.
- This is made up of an average of 18 acts of violence committed against them in childhood and 19 further acts of violence* committed against them as an adult woman.
- On average, women will be subjected to at least 26 sexual crimes in their lifespan. Of these, 13 will be committed before the age of 18 and a further 13 sexual crimes will be committed after their 18th birthday.

** Acts of violence are defined as physical assault, physical abuse, sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced pregnancies, forced terminations, sexual exploitation, sex trafficking, rape threats, death threats and digital sexual crimes such as being sent unsolicited images of nudity, being forced to watch porn and being forced to look at child abuse imagery.*

Violence against women before 18 years old: Key facts

Out of a sample of 22,419 women, before they were 18 years old:

Physical violence before 18 years old

- 70% were slapped, punched or hit by someone and 43% were subjected to this more than 3 times
- 30% were kicked by someone and 15% were subjected to this more than 3 times
- 53% were pushed over by someone and 30% were subjected to this more than 3 times
- 18% were strangled or choked by someone and 10% were subjected to this more than once
- 21% were thrown down a flight of stairs or across a room by someone at least once
- 32% were threatened to be killed or seriously harmed by someone and 17% were subjected to this more than 3 times
- 23% were spat at by someone
- 13% were bitten by someone

Sexual violence before 18 years old

- 82% were sexually harassed by someone and 62% were subjected to this at least 3 times
- 51% were kissed by someone without consent (forced or coerced) and 18% were subjected to this more than 3 times
- 80% were sexually touched without consent by someone and 44% were subjected to this at least 3 times
- 30% were forced to engage in sex acts by someone before the age of 13 years old and 15% were subjected to this at least 3 times before 13
- 25% were forced or coerced to give or receive oral sex

- 23% were forced or coerced to masturbate someone or themselves
- 33% were forced or coerced into penetrative sex they did not consent to and 20% were subjected to this at least twice
- 14% were forced to watch porn with an adult
- 20% were given alcohol or drugs before being forced into sexual activity

Other forms of violence committed against women before 18 years old:

- 94% were catcalled by men in public and 80% were subjected to this at least 3 times
- 36% were sent an unsolicited nude picture of a male and 19% were subjected to this at least 3 times
- 2% were sent an unsolicited nude picture of a female and less than 1% were subjected to this more than once
- 50% were sent sexually offensive or violent messages online and 33% were subjected to this more than 3 times
- 11% were sent a rape threat from a man online
- 10% were sent a death threat from someone online
- 10% had their private images (including nudes and videos) shared online by someone

Violence against women after 18 years old: Key facts

Out of a sample of 22,419 women, after their 18th birthday:

Physical violence after 18 years old

- 46% have been punched, slapped or hit by someone and 33% were subjected to this more than 3 times
- 31% have been kicked by someone and 13% were subjected to this more than 3 times
- 50% have been pushed over by someone and 36% were subjected to this more than 3 times
- 22% have been thrown down a flight of stairs or across a room
- 40% have had an item thrown at them and 30% were subjected to this more than 3 times
- 36% have been threatened to be killed or seriously harmed and 26% were subjected to this more than 3 times
- 20% have been threatened with the killing or harming of someone they love and 13% were subjected to this more than 3 times
- 25% have been spat at by someone
- 5% have been forced into a pregnancy they did not want
- 6% have been forced into a termination/abortion process they did not want to go ahead with

Sexual violence after 18 years old

- 88% have been sexually harassed by someone and 83% have been subjected to this more than 3 times
- 56% have been kissed by someone without consent (forced or coerced) and 20% have been subjected to this more than 3 times

- 87% have been sexually touched by someone without consent and 77% have been subjected to this more than 3 times
- 51% have woken up to their male partner having sex with them or performing sex acts on them whilst they are asleep and 27% have been subjected to this more than 3 times
- 45% were forced to engage in a sex act they did not consent to and 31% have been subjected to this more than 3 times
- 17% had nude photos/videos of them that they did not know had been taken shared without their consent
- 55% have been coerced into penetrative sex they did not consent to and 43% were subjected to this more than 3 times
- 27% have been physically forced or threatened with violence to have sex they did not consent to and 16% were subjected to this more than 3 times
- 43% have had someone perform a sex act on them that they didn't consent to and 27% were subjected to this at least three times
- 16% have been forced or coerced to perform sex acts someone saw in porn
- 21% have been sexually exploited by someone with more power or money than them
- 30% have been subjected to sexual intercourse in which their partner started to become violent while having sex (including choking, punched, spat at or injured on purpose during sex)
- 6% have been forced or coerced to have sex whilst other people watched
- 38% have been forced to have sex whilst very drunk or high when they could not consent and 25% were subjected to this more than 3 times

Other forms of violence committed against women after 18 years old

- 95% have been catcalled by a man in public and 93% have been subjected to this at least 3 times
- 52% have been sent an unsolicited nude image of a male and 42% have been subjected to this at least 3 times
- 4% have been sent an unsolicited nude image of a female and 2% have been subjected to this at least 3 times
- 33% have received sexually offensive or violent messages online
- 13% have received a rape threat from a man online
- 11% have received a death threat from someone online
- 16% have been told to kill themselves by someone online
- 24% have received abusive or offensive comments about her body online

Reporting and disclosure of violence against women: Key facts

Crimes committed against women before 18 years old

- 92% of women did not report physical violence crimes committed against them to the police
- 92% of women did not report sexual violence crimes committed against them to the police
- 98% of women did not report any other forms of violence and harassment committed against them to the police
- Only 2% of women reported that anyone was convicted of any of the crimes committed against them in childhood
- 53% of women did disclose the violence or abuse to someone else other than the police before 18 years old

Crimes committed against women after 18 years old

- 81% of women did not report physical violence crimes committed against them to police
- 91% of women did not report sexual violence crimes committed against them to police
- 94% of women did not report any other forms of violence and harassment committed against them to police
- Only 4% of women reported that anyone was convicted of any of the crimes committed against them in adulthood
- 69% of women did disclose the violence or abuse to someone else other than the police after 18 years old

Perpetrators of violence against women: Key facts

Out of 22,419 women who recorded 808,607 acts of violence committed against them in childhood and adulthood:

- The majority perpetrators of violence against women and girls were men in both childhood and adulthood
- In violence committed against women and girls in childhood, 80-90% of all offences were committed by men. However, in regard to sexual offences, between 92-98% were committed by men.
- In violence committed against women in adulthood, 94% of all offences were committed by men. However, in regard to sexual offences, between 97-99% were committed by men.
- In childhood, the most common perpetrators of violence against girls were fathers, boyfriends, other male family members (most commonly brothers, grandfathers and uncles) and male friends from school.
- However, in regard to sexual offences committed against girls in their childhoods, perpetrators were much broader and included professionals, faith leaders, teachers, police officers, driving instructors, tutors, carers, friends' fathers, strangers and male family friends.
- In adulthood, the most common perpetrators of violence against women were male partners and ex-partners, followed by male strangers and male friends.
- The perpetrator data collected for this report is vast, and will be reported in much further detail in the full report in summer 2021

Impact of violence against women: Key facts

22,419 women answered 22 statements about the impact of violence on themselves and other women and girls

Item	Result Ratio	%
I blame myself for the things that were done to me in childhood	1 in 5 women agreed or strongly agreed	19%
I blame myself for the things that were done to me in adulthood	1 in 4 women agreed or strongly agreed	26%
My mental health is generally good	1 in 3 women agreed or strongly agreed	33%
I didn't feel supported when I disclosed or reported the crimes against me	4 in 10 women agreed or strongly agreed	41%
I feel I got justice for what was done to me	More than 9 in 10 women disagreed or strongly disagreed	98%
If anything like this happened to me again, I would not report it to the police	More than 4 in 10 women agreed or strongly agreed	45%
Professionals blamed me for being subjected to abuse or violence	1 in 6 women agreed or strongly agreed	16%
My family members blamed me for being subjected to abuse or violence	1 in 4 women agreed or strongly agreed	24%
I often worry about it happening to me again	3 in 5 women agreed or strongly agreed	61%
I drink or take drugs to cope with the feelings and memories	1 in 5 women agreed or strongly agreed	22%
I used my experiences of being harmed to do something positive with my life	1 in 2 women agreed or strongly agreed	48%
I have been able to have happy and healthy relationships since I was subjected to violence and abuse	3 in 5 women agreed or strongly agreed	59%

People around me would describe me as a confident woman	3 in 4 women agreed or strongly agreed	75%
I feel that there is enough support for women and girls who have been subjected to violence and abuse	9 in 10 women disagreed or strongly disagreed	93%
I don't feel that there is any stigma around me saying that I have been subjected to violence and abuse	4 in 5 women disagreed or strongly disagreed	84%
I dislike the term 'survivor' when people talk about women subjected to violence and abuse	4 in 10 women agreed or strongly agreed	40%
I dislike the term 'victim' when people talk about women subjected to violence and abuse	4 in 10 women agreed or strongly agreed	43%
I don't have enough information about my own trauma responses or coping mechanisms to understand them	4 in 10 women agreed or strongly agreed	42%
I still suffer from physical illnesses or injuries from the violence and abuse I was subjected to	1 in 6 women agreed or strongly agreed	17%
I think the violence or abuse I was subjected to influenced my sexuality or sexual preferences	More than 4 in 10 women agreed or strongly agreed	46%
I trust that the criminal justice system does a good job of holding criminals accountable for violence against women and girls	9 in 10 women disagreed or strongly disagreed	94%

Future research

The collection of such comprehensive data from over 22,000 women means that we are able to explore the data in detail over the coming year. We plan to release several reports from this data including the following reports:

1. 'I thought it was just a part of life': Full report (Analysing the data of women subjected to violence and abuse in the UK since birth)
2. Understanding personal characteristics and violence against women and girls in the UK since birth
3. Exploring the identity and relationships of perpetrators of violence against women and girls in the UK
4. 'I thought it was just a part of life': Exploring the experiences of women subjected to violence and abuse in the UK (Qualitative study)
5. Violence against women and girls in the UK since birth: Implications and guidance for local and national government

This 'key facts' document has been generated and published to ensure that the most important data reaches those who may need it without delay. Our full report including all data analysis will be released for free in summer 2021.

Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of the women who responded to this call for data. We know from speaking to thousands of you that this was a tough study to take part in, and that for many of you, it was the first time you had ever been asked about how many specific acts of violence you have been subjected to since you were born. Thank you for taking part in this vital research.

Secondly, we would like to thank the clients and customers of VictimFocus and VictimFocus Resources. Every purchase made funds our research, publishing and future projects. This means that we can publish for free, and host free events to explore and discuss violence, abuse and trauma of women and girls. Thank you for supporting our work.