Older people and domestic abuse

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Domestic abuse overview

• Around 2.1 million people suffer from domestic abuse in England and Wales – 1.4 million women (8.5% of the population) and 700,000 men (4.5% of the population).
• Two women a week die at the hands of their partner or ex-partner.
• 85% of victims made five attempts on average to get support from professionals in the year before they accessed effective help to stop the abuse.
• ONS doesn’t currently collect statistics for over 60s though this will change this year.
• SafeLives estimates that approximately 120,000 individuals aged 65+ have experienced at least one form of abuse (psychological, physical, sexual or financial).
• Only 3% of victims aged 60 or over are accessing Idva services supported by the Marac model
About Spotlights

• Particular groups are not accessing the **support** they need

• Our data showed us that older people and disabled people are **not being identified** and **accessing support** soon enough.

• Older people and disabled people’s **experience of domestic violence** is different to the stereotypical ‘victim’

• Domestic violence practitioners or the police may not always be best placed to **identify** these victims sooner

• We need a multi-agency approach to better **identify and support** them.
About Spotlights

• Spotlights was developed to highlight groups that sometimes go unseen by support agencies.

• Each Spotlight series runs for 6 weeks and focuses on a different ‘unseen’ group’s experience of domestic violence.

• We deliver content from experts around the UK in an accessible way.

• At the end of the Spotlight, we bring together our data, and the advice and guidance from experts and survivors, and develop a policy report.
Spotlight #1

Older people and domestic abuse

Victims aged 61+ are much more likely to experience abuse from an adult family member or current intimate partner than those 60 and under.

- Victims aged 60 and under: 6%
- Victims aged 61+: 44%

Older victims are less likely to attempt to leave in the year before accessing help, and more likely to be living with the perpetrator after getting support.

- Under 61: 68%
- 61+: 27%

- Under 61: 9%
- 61+: 32%

Older victims are significantly more likely to have a disability – for a third, this is physical (34%).
What our data tells us

Victims aged 61+ are more likely to experience abuse from a **current partner** or **adult family member** than those under 61 years.

- **6%** Victims aged 60 or under
- **28%** Victims aged 61+
- **44%** Victims aged 61+

67% are **identified by the police** (with only 2% identified by Adult Social Care).

**Ending domestic abuse**

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Victims 61+ endure violence for much longer **before accessing support** (6.5 years vs 3 years)
What our data tells us

Percentage of older adults that are **not visible to services**, 80%

Out of those who are visible, ¼ live with abuse for **more than 20 years**, 25%
What our data tells us

Victims 61+ are **more likely** to have a disability, and for a third this is **physical**.

- **13%** Victims aged 60 or under
- **48%** Victims aged 61 or over
- **34%** Victims aged 61+ with a physical disability
30 deaths

74% Intimate Partner Homicide - 22
  Intimate partner 14
  Murder-suicide 4
  Partner also carer 4

26% Family-Related Homicide - 8
  Matricide 5
  Patricide 2
  Fraticide 1
30 deaths

Intimate Partner Homicide

22

- Stabbing
- Strangulation
- Head Injury

82% occurred in the home of the victim
- 3 at the home of the perpetrator
- 1 on the street/stalking

Family-Related Homicide

8

All in the home of the victim
What to draw from the data

• Older victims are not identified soon enough by services

• Increased abuse from current partners and family members means they are likely to be isolated and abused by those that they depend upon for care.

• Increased rates of disability amongst older victims could mean that they are even more isolated and vulnerable to coercion and control

• Even after receiving domestic violence support, older victims are still vulnerable to ongoing abuse from their current partner.
What the Spotlight Experts told us

Age UK

• Understanding: isolation, retirement, health, caring roles and shame

• Joining up approaches: the abuse of older people requires an Adult Safeguarding Response.

Solace Women’s Aid-Silver Project- Over 55 Domestic Abuse Specialists

• Victims may not recognise their experience as abuse

• Reluctance to discuss abuse and think its too late

• Isolation and unsupported - both socially and physically

Ending domestic abuse

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What the Spotlight Experts told us

Marac Scrutiny Panel

- The introduction of the Care Act 2014 led to adding Adult Social Care to the 8 core agency groups

- ASC needs to play an active role in Marac - research, attendance, follow up actions, flagging and tagging cases

- Active role in safety planning and action planning that is responsive to older person’s—using their expertise and influence
While the majority of older clients are female there are much higher proportions of older men also experiencing abuse (21%) compared with those under 60 (4%).
Insights Data: Most frequent referral routes

Over 61 compared with under 60

Older clients are more likely to be referred through the police (67% compared with 59%)

They are also less likely to access services themselves through self-referral routes (6% compared with 14%)

Older clients are a hard to reach group

Clients aged 61+ are underrepresented across services using Insights, meaning they may not be accessing the support they require.

Five clients aged 60+ (2%) were referred by adult safeguarding. This is an increase from one client (0.5%) aged 60+ in 2014/15.
Older clients have a lower level of complex needs in terms of mental health and substance misuse, but are much more likely to have a disability. For a third, this disability is physical (34%).
Themis annual data (2015-16)

Comparing the Themis hospital sites to the comparison sites in the same areas.

• Hospital services are significantly more likely to have older people as clients than local Idva services (i.e. all other services, none of them health i.e. IRIS)

• 50+ clients account for 14% of hospital Idva clients but only 10% of local Idva clients. This difference is highly significant.

• 60+ clients account for 5% of hospital Idva clients but only 3% of local Idva clients. This difference is significant.

• 65+ clients account for 4% of hospital Idva clients
Barriers

- Perception by older people that services are for younger people
- Generational/cultural/societal attitudes
- Family dynamics
- Health issues
- Financial
- Housing
- May not recognise their own experience as abuse
- Isolation
- Less likely to call 999
- Identification issues

Ending domestic abuse

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Policy and Practice Recommendations

- Systematic Invisibility
- Long term abuse and dependency issues
- Generational attitudes about abuse may make it hard to identify
- Increased risk of adult family abuse
- Services are not effectively targeted at older victims, and do not always meet their needs
- Need for greater coordination between services
Policy and Practice Recommendations

• Provide in-depth, face-to-face training for health professionals, social workers, care workers and any council staff who are regularly in contact with older people, accompanied by a Domestic Abuse Champion programme in Adult Services to ensure the learning is continued and new best practice can be communicated.

• Ensure that contracts for provision of domestic abuse support recognise that older victims may need prolonged interventions due to their abuse being sustained over a long period, and potentially a desire not to leave the family home.

• Provision of specialist domestic abuse services in a health setting – Idvas in hospitals/Mental Health Trusts, IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) in primary care.
Policy and Practice Recommendations

• Ensuring there is effective safety planning on the discharge of an older victim or perpetrator from hospital to ensure they aren’t returned to an abusive situation
• Raise awareness of domestic abuse among older victims and ensure services are targeted to places older people will see – e.g. GP surgeries, public transport
• Training for domestic abuse professionals on inter-family violence and safeguarding issues around older people.
• Ensure older victims are consulted as part of service re-design such as housing and refuge options.
• Embed Adult Social Care as a core Marac agency to help increase crucial information sharing needed to keep victims safe.
• Adult Safeguarding Boards should monitor referrals of older victims to domestic abuse services and at Marac and action plan accordingly.
Spotlights older people

• 2 webinars
• Podcasts
• Care pathway and guidance
• National scrutiny panel report (older people at Marac)
• Final report - older people and domestic violence (published Dec 2016)
• Guidance for LSAB to link in with Marac
• [http://solacewomensaid.org/the-silver-project/](http://solacewomensaid.org/the-silver-project/)
SafeLives is listening

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