

Domestic Violence and Abuse – size of the problem in Herefordshire

Version 0.5

Herefordshire Council Strategic Intelligence Team

November 2018

CONTENTS

Summary of main points	3
Introduction	3
Prevalence of domestic abuse	4
The estimated costs of domestic violence and abuse	8
Domestic abuse recorded by the police	9
West Mercia's Women's Aid.....	13
High risk victims of DVA.....	14
Conclusions	15

SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS

- It is estimated that 7.6 per cent (3,800) of females aged 16-59 and 4.1 per cent (2,100) of males aged 16-59 were victims of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) in the county during the year ending March 2017.
- The cost to public services in tackling violence against women and girls in Herefordshire has been estimated to be £10.8 during the year ending March 2017.
- It is estimated that 6.5 per cent (2,100) of children aged 0 to 15 lived in a household affected by DVA in Herefordshire during the last year and around a quarter (26%) of children lived in a household where an adult has ever experienced DVA.
- West Mercia Police recorded 3,071 victims (16.2 per thousand population) of domestic violence and abuse (all ages) in the year ending March 2017 (2,024 females and 1,047 males). *Note that some offences and incidents have more than one victim.*
- Herefordshire's prevalence rate of reported DVA related crimes (13.5 per thousand population), was relatively low compared with England & Wales as a whole (18.3), the West Mercia area (19.2) and is lower than five out of the seven "Most Similar Forces" (MSFs) to West Mercia during the year ending March 2017.

INTRODUCTION

This summary applies the latest intelligence on domestic violence and abuse (DVA) gathered from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, West Mercia Police and West Mercia Women's Aid to estimate the current and future size of the problem within Herefordshire. Data from the different sources do not necessarily relate to the same victims, although there will be some overlap.

Evidence from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)¹ showed that nationally, around four in five victims (79 per cent) of partner abuse did not report the abuse to the police. Furthermore, the support services offered to victims of domestic abuse are also not reliant on the reporting of domestic abuse to the police. Caution must therefore be applied in interpreting the available data; it can only be used as a marker of the levels of support provided and action taken

¹ [Crime Survey for England and Wales year ending March 2017](#)

by the relevant organisations; it cannot be used to measure the true extent or patterns in domestic abuse.

The CSEW is the best indicator of the prevalence of DVA. However, it cannot be used to make any inferences about demands on the police, the criminal justice system, or service provision.

PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Prevalence rates for DVA are estimated from the Crime Survey for England and Wales. It is a sampled survey of 50,000 randomly selected households in England and Wales on an annual basis. The survey collects information on the numbers of victims of partner abuse (non-sexual), family abuse (non-sexual) and sexual assault or stalking carried out by a current or former partner or other family member in the last 12 months.

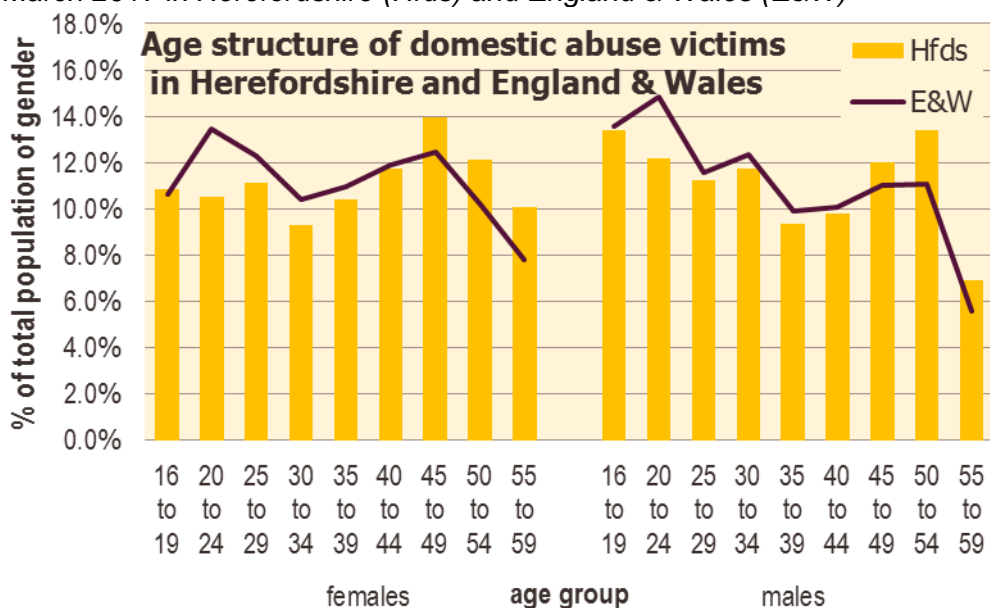
The survey asks respondents about their experience of crime, regardless of whether or not it resulted in a report to the police, and as such provides the best estimates of actual prevalence of crime. Experiences of DVA are sought in a self-completion section on intimate violence which is asked of adults aged 16 to 59 years, covering experience of emotional, financial and physical abuse by partners or family members, as well as sexual assaults and stalking by any person.

The Crime Survey for England & Wales (CSEW) found that in 2016/17, 7.8 per cent of females aged 16-59 and 4.2 per cent of males aged 16-59 were victim of DVA in England & Wales during the last year. By applying the age and gender specific national prevalence rates found from the survey to the mid-2017 estimates of Herefordshire's population² it is estimated that there were 3,800 females (7.6 per cent) and 2,100 male (4.1) victims of DVA aged 16-59 in the county.

Herefordshire has an older age structure than England & Wales as a whole; it has a lower proportion of younger working age adults (from the age of 16 to mid-forties), but has a higher proportion of older working age adults. This means that Herefordshire is expected to also have an older age profile of potential domestic abuse victims compared with nationally, as shown in Figure 1; with just under half (48 per cent) of Herefordshire's potential female victims who are aged 40 or over, compared with 42 per cent nationally; 42 per cent of Herefordshire's potential male victims are aged 40 over, compared with 38 per cent nationally. The female 45 to 49 age group are estimated to account for the largest number of all victims, with nine per cent of all potential victims (14 per cent of potential female victims) in Herefordshire.

² [Annual Mid-Year Population Estimates for the UK, Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright 2018](#)

Figure 1: Age profile of domestic abuse victims, by sex, during the year ending March 2017 in Herefordshire (Hfds) and England & Wales (E&W)

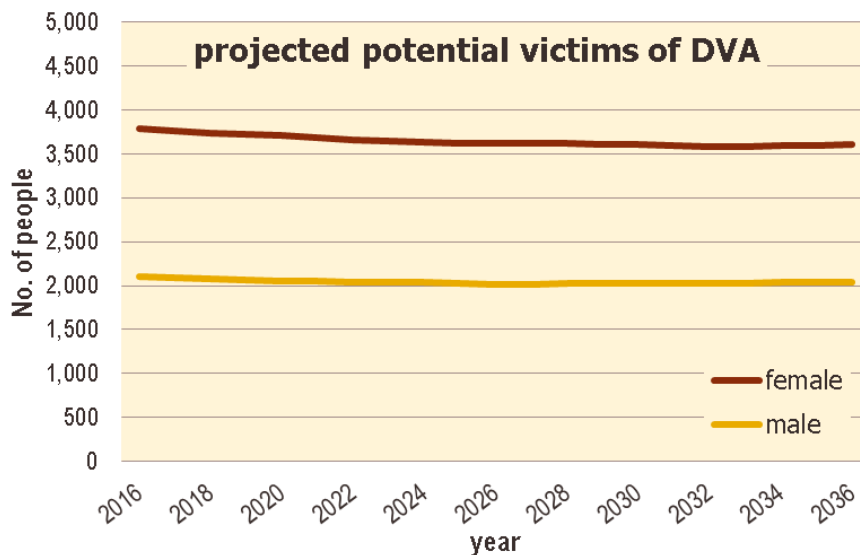


Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales year ending March 2017, Annual Mid-Year Population Estimates for the UK, Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright 2018

If recent trends in demography were to continue within the county, natural ageing would see Herefordshire’s working age population gradually fall over the next 20 years, Table 1 and Figure 2 show how the numbers of potential victims aged 16 to 59 are estimated to change over the next 20 years. This projection has been derived by applying the current national prevalence rates by sex and five year age groups from the CSEW to ONS’ 2016-based sub-national population projections for Herefordshire. There is estimated to be a five per cent reduction on the number of females who will have experienced domestic abuse over the next 20 years and a three per cent reduction on the number of male victims.

Table 1 & Figure 2: Estimated current and projected potential victims of domestic abuse in adults aged 16 to 59 years in Herefordshire per year ending March

year	female	male
2016	3,790	2,100
2017	3,766	2,087
2018	3,741	2,074
2019	3,720	2,061
2020	3,710	2,054
2021	3,687	2,047
2022	3,663	2,039
2023	3,649	2,034
2024	3,635	2,032
2025	3,624	2,024
2026	3,617	2,019
2027	3,616	2,018
2028	3,615	2,020
2029	3,611	2,024
2030	3,602	2,028
2031	3,590	2,028
2032	3,582	2,029
2033	3,582	2,029
2034	3,590	2,033
2035	3,597	2,037
2036	3,604	2,041



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales year ending December 2017, Office for National Statistics 2018; 2016-based sub-national population projections. Office for National Statistics © Crown copyright 2018

According to national figures, almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of clients accessing an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service had children living in their household at the time, whereas under half of respondents (44 per cent) who said they experienced partner abuse in the last year in the CSEW had children living in the household. This suggests that victims who have children living in their household are more likely to access support services than those who do not.³

³ [Office for National Statistics. Pub. Nov 2017. Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2017](#)

CHILDREN LIVING IN A HOUSEHOLD AFFECTED BY DVA

The Domestic violence and abuse: evaluation of the local response in Herefordshire 2017 (unpublished) identified a gap in intelligence for children and young people. A recent report published in July 2018 by the Children's Commissioner for England⁴ provides estimated prevalence rates for children living in households affected by DVA. The published prevalence rates were derived from the 2014 Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS), a sample of around 7,500 randomly selected adults in living in private households in England.

A limitation of the APMS is that only one adult per household was surveyed with the implication that the full extent of any issues experienced by other household members could potentially not be made apparent; therefore these prevalence rates are only likely to serve as a conservative estimate. However, the estimates produced from this analysis provide added value over the existing available evidence. Furthermore, it was not possible to establish how the children in a household were related to the survey respondent.

Prevalence rates derived from the APMS and estimated numbers of Herefordshire children living in a household where an adult has experienced DVA are shown in Table 2.

7.1 per cent of children aged 0 to 5 and 6.2 per cent of children aged 6-15 lived in a household where an adult has been affected by DVA in England during the last year (2013-14). An estimated prevalence rate for 0-17 year olds was also determined by applying prevalence rates for 0 to 5 and 6-15 year olds to ONS population figures for 0-17 year olds pro rata. By applying the age specific national prevalence rates to the mid-2017 estimates of Herefordshire's population⁵ it is estimated that there were 800 children aged 0 to 5; 1,300 children aged 6-15 and 2,400 children aged 0 to 17 that lived in a household affected by DVA in Herefordshire during the last year.

Table 2 also shows the estimated prevalence of children exposed to DVA *at any time in the past* - it is estimated that there were 3,100 children aged 0 to 5 (26.7 per cent); 5,100 children aged 6-15 (25.3 per cent) and 9,300 (25.8 per cent) children aged 0 to 17 who live with an adult who has ever experienced DVA.

⁴ [Children's Commissioner for England. July 2018. Estimating the prevalence of the 'toxic trio'. Evidence from the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey. Vulnerability Technical Report 2.](#)

⁵ [Annual Mid-Year Population Estimates for the UK, Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright 2018](#)

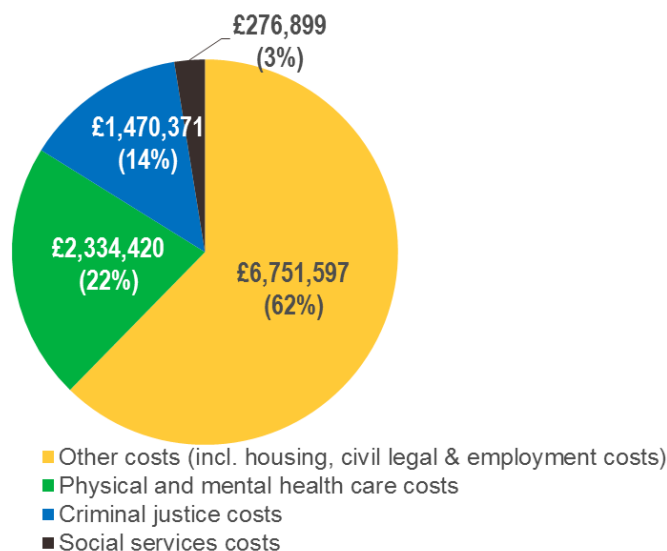
Table 2. Estimated prevalence of children in Herefordshire who live with an adult who has experienced DVA.

	Adult experienced DVA in last year		Adult has ever experienced DVA	
	No.	%	No.	%
Children aged 0-5	800	7.1%	3,100	26.7%
Children aged 6-15	1,300	6.2%	5,100	25.3%
Children aged 0-17*	2,400	6.6%	9,300	25.8%

Source: Children's Commissioner for England. July 2018⁶; Annual Mid-Year Population Estimates for the UK, Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright 2017

THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

The cost to public services in tackling violence against women and girls has been estimated using the Home Office's 'ready reckoner' tool⁷. In 2016/17, it was estimated Herefordshire spent £10.8 million in responding to DVA, the majority in costs such as housing, civil legal and employment costs (62 per cent); £2.3 million on physical and mental health care costs; £1.5 million on criminal justice costs and nearly £280,000 for social care.



Total costs (not including human and emotional costs)	=	Physical and mental health care costs	+	Criminal justice costs	+	Social services costs	+	Other costs (incl. housing, civil legal & employment costs)	+	Human and emotional costs (not included in total)
£10,833,286		£2,334,420		£1,470,371		£276,899		£6,751,597		£34,588,481

Source: Ready Reckoner Tool⁷

⁶ Children's Commissioner for England. July 2018. *Estimating the prevalence of the 'toxic trio'. Evidence from the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey. Vulnerability Technical Report 2.*

⁷ *Ready Reckoner Tool* - The costs for Herefordshire are derived from the national estimates of cost published by Järvinen et al (2008), and given by the proportion of the national population resident in Herefordshire. An HM Treasury GDP deflator multiplier has been used to bring the costs up to 2016/17 levels.

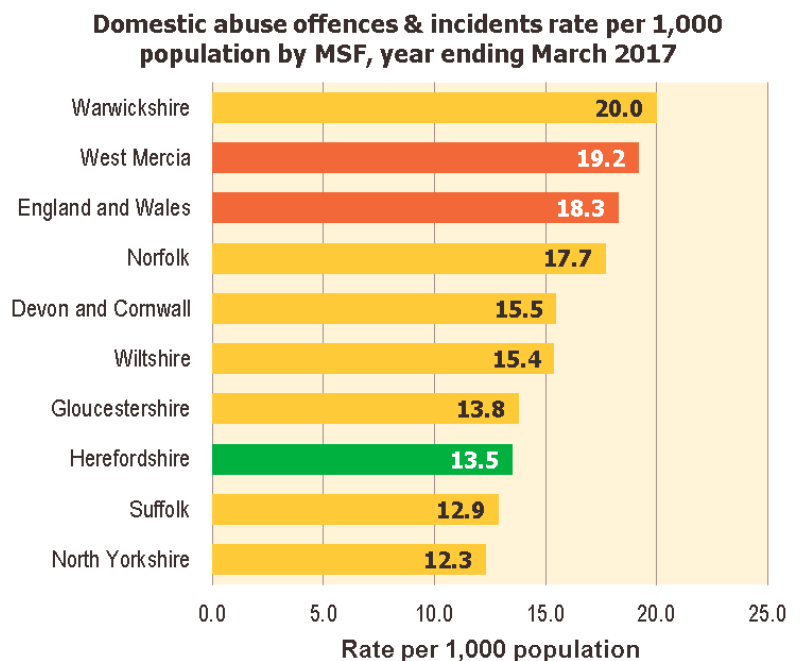
DOMESTIC ABUSE RECORDED BY THE POLICE

Note - real changes in the level of domestic abuse are likely to be masked by changes made to reporting practices that came into effect during 2015-16; process improvements; potential increases in reporting by victims in the light of a greater awareness in society as a whole and forces actively encouraging victims to come forward to report these crimes.

As Table 3 and Figure 3 show, in 2016-17 Herefordshire's prevalence rate of DVA related crimes (13.5 per thousand population), is relatively low compared with England & Wales as a whole (18.3), the West Mercia area (19.2) and is lower than five out of the seven "Most Similar Forces" (MSFs) to West Mercia; just North Yorkshire and Suffolk had lower prevalence rates out of the MSFs.

Table 3 & Figure 3: Domestic abuse offences & incidents rate per 1,000 population for Herefordshire, West Mercia's Most Similar Forces (MSF) and England & Wales, year ending March 2017

Area	PRC: Combined domestic abuse-related incidents and offences - Rate per 1,000
Warwickshire	20.0
West Mercia	19.2
England and Wales	18.3
Norfolk	17.7
Devon and Cornwall	15.5
Wiltshire	15.4
Gloucestershire	13.8
Herefordshire	13.5
Suffolk	12.9
North Yorkshire	12.3



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales year ending December 2017, Office for National Statistics 2018; West Mercia Police; Annual Mid-Year Population Estimates for the UK, Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright 2017

It is important to note that some offences and incidents have more than one victim (e.g. a male and a female victim) - West Mercia Police recorded 3,071 victims in Herefordshire (16.2 per thousand population) of domestic violence and abuse (all ages) in 2016-17, 2,024 females and

1,047 males; equating to around two-thirds of victims who are women and around a third who are men. However, it is also possible that not all offences and incidents have an identified victim.

The above figures are taken from the most recently published sources⁸. However, more recent data (to the year ending March 2018) on overall numbers of DVA crimes were supplied by West Mercia Police. In the case of repeat offenders, there will be some duplication in the number of victims due to there being more than one recorded crime per address. After removing duplicate addresses, there were a total number of 1,867 recorded addresses within Herefordshire during 2017-18 where an offence/crime incident took place.

Data on the number of recorded victims is not available at present (the year ending March 2018); however, according to West Mercia police data from 2016-17 there were, on average, around 1.2 victims associated with each offence/crime incidence. By applying this average number of victims per crime to the most recent crime figures, it is estimated that there were a total of 2,188 victims in Herefordshire in 2017-18.

No details of the victims age profile were provided with the current data; however, by applying the proportion of victims aged 17 to 60 from the Domestic Violence and Abuse Needs Assessment 2013, it is estimated that there were around 2,021 victims of a police recorded crime aged 17 to 60 in Herefordshire in 2017-18. If Herefordshire's police reported figures were as high as those estimated from the CSEW would mean an estimated additional 3,832 victims to those the police are presently aware of.

⁸ West Mercia Police. Domestic Abuse Marker Applied- Crimes & Crimed Incidents, 2016-17

OUTCOMES

Arrest rates

Arrest rates are a means of identifying whether a force is achieving a 'positive action'⁹ to victims of domestic abuse. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) carried out an inspection into how police forces are responding to domestic violence. A report of the HMIC's findings for West Mercia was published in 2014¹⁰. One of the findings of this inspection was that the relatively low arrest rate in West Mercia, compared to other forces, was an issue that the force should review.

In 2016-17, the proportion of offences meeting a condition to arrest¹¹ where an actual arrest was made was 72 per cent in Herefordshire (compared with 69 per cent across the West Mercia area as a whole) - a marked improvement in arrest rates compared with the previous two years (Table 4) - a 1.4 fold increase in both areas over the two previous years.

Table 4: Arrest rates in Herefordshire and the West Mercia area as a whole over the last three years

Year	Hfds	W Mercia
2014-15	56%	53%
2015-16	53%	52%
2016-17	72%	68%

Source: West Mercia Police

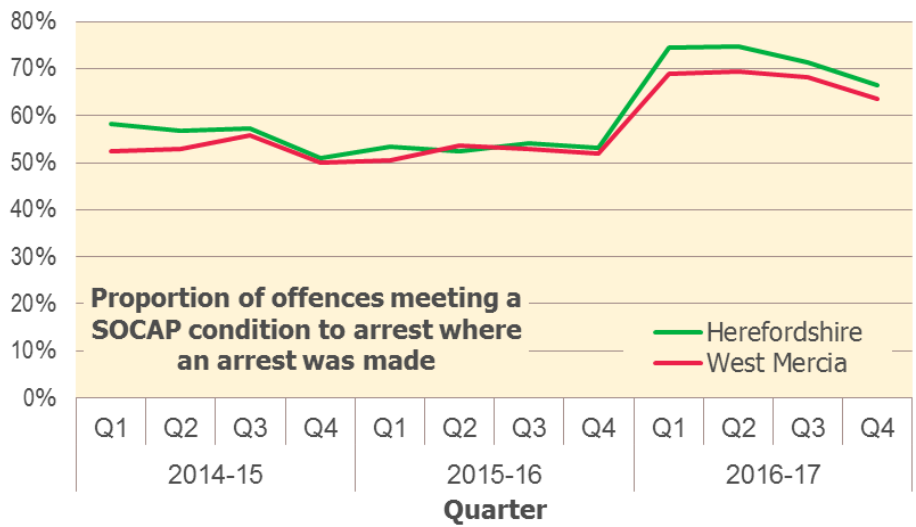
Quarterly trends in the arrest rate for Herefordshire compared with West Mercia and the neighbouring police force of Warwickshire are shown in Figure 4 below. As can be seen, an increase in the proportion of arrests to offences increased rapidly in the first quarter of 2016-17 in all three areas; the rate in Herefordshire is currently similar to West Mercia as a whole.

⁹ 'Positive action' refers to the steps and action taken at all stages of the police response to ensure effective protection of victims and children, while allowing the criminal justice system to hold the offender to account. It is often used in the context of arrest policy, police guidance states that "arrest will normally be 'necessary' under the terms of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, to protect a child or vulnerable person, prevent the suspect causing injury and/or to allow for the prompt and effective investigation of the offence".

¹⁰ [HMIC \(2014\). West Mercia Police's approach to tackling domestic abuse](#)

¹¹ Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 - where an offence has been committed in a domestic abuse case, arrest will normally be necessary to protect a child or vulnerable person, prevent the suspect causing injury and/or allow for the prompt and effective investigation of the offence.

Figure 4: Proportion of offences where an arrest was made 2014-15 to 2016-17



Source: West Mercia Police

More recent data is available; however, it is apparent that there have been changes to the conditions for arrest criteria during the first two quarters of 2017-18, such that comparing arrest rates for this period with earlier periods would not be comparing like with like. However, considering the actual numbers of arrests made during the first two quarters of 2017-18 shows that the average number of arrests per quarter has fallen by around a quarter (23 per cent) from last year’s figure and is similar to levels seen prior to 2015-16 at around 100 arrests per quarter.

WEST MERCIA'S WOMEN'S AID

It is possible that some victims unknown to the police are accessing alternative services such as West Mercia Women's Aid (WMWA).

Profile of WMWA clients in the year ending March 2018

The latest data (year ending March 2018) supplied by West Mercia Women's Aid show that the service had received a total of -

- 1,294 referrals; whether self-referrals, through the helpline or professional referrals such as the police, local authority, health services etc.
- 4,528 calls made to the West Mercia Women's (WMWA) Aid helpdesk, of which 1,134 were unique calls. These can include calls from the victims themselves, family & friends, members of the public, referring agencies/organisations.
- 887 service users.

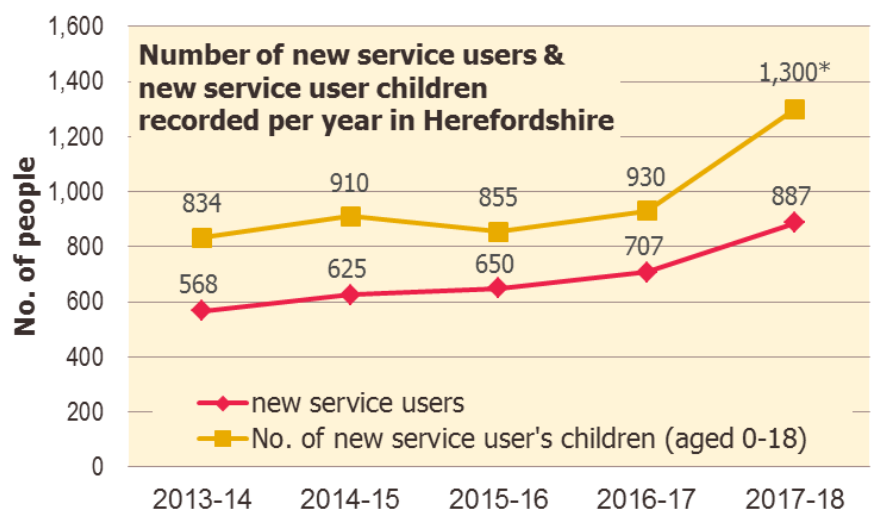
Trends in WMWA clients

Tables 5 & 6 and Figure 5 show the total number of clients accessing WMWA each year since 2013-14 and the total number of children (aged 0 to 18) in households accessing a service each year since 2013-14.

Table 5 & 6 and Figure 5

year	referrals received	new service users
2013-14	653	568
2014-15	764	625
2015-16	947	650
2016-17	971	707
2017-18	1,294	887

year	No. of new service user children
2013-14	834
2014-15	910
2015-16	855
2016-17	930
2017-18	1,300*



*Rounded to the nearest 100 to reflect the relative level of uncertainty in this figure.

Source: West Mercia Women's Aid

There is a continuing upward trend in the numbers of referrals received by the Herefordshire branch of WMWA, of which around 70 per cent each year, for the last three years, are referred on to a particular service such as group work, Helpline, Safety Planning Support, 1-2-1 support and refuge.

There is also an increase in the number of children in service user households, which is in line with the increase in the number of service users, with an average of 1.5 children per household accessing a service over the previous five years.

Minority groups

The recording of minority group is not consistent enough to provide a full picture of service users. Of the 887 new service users recorded in in 2017-18, ethnicity was not recorded in 20 per cent of cases. Of the remaining 706 service users, fewer than 10 per cent were recorded as being of a BAME group.

A consideration of sexual group is not viable due to only two-fifths of cases assigned to a particular category.

HIGH RISK VICTIMS OF DVA

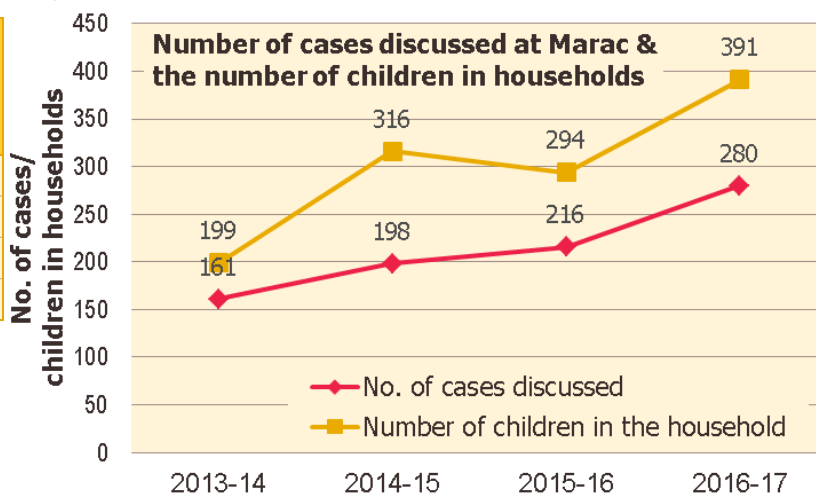
The local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), triages referrals and acts as a further referral pathway. MARACs are multi-agency meetings which are attended by statutory and voluntary representatives to share information around high risk victims of DVA and their children. Of the 280 cases discussed at MARAC in Herefordshire during 2016-17, 29 per cent were repeat cases; compared with 26 per cent of cases seen across all MARACS nationally and the “Most Similar Forces” (MSFs) to West Mercia.

As can be seen in Table 7 and Figure 6 below, there has been an upward trend in the number of high risk domestic abuse cases discussed at MARAC over the last five years.

The number of children in households of MARAC cases has been increasing in line with the overall number of cases discussed since 2013-14. The average number of children in households per case discussed is 1.4; compared with 1.3 nationally and 1.2 for the “Most Similar Forces” (MSFs) to West Mercia.

Table 7 & Figure 6: Number of cases discussed at MARAC and the number of children in the household discussed (2013-14 to 2016-17).

year	No. of cases discussed	Number of children in the household
2013-14	161	199
2014-15	198	316
2015-16	216	294
2016-17	280	391



Source: West Mercia Police

Of all cases discussed in 2016-17, 12 per cent (33 cases) were from a BAME group (compared with 16 per cent nationally) and there were no cases where the people involved were of an LGBT group (compare with one per cent nationally).

CONCLUSIONS

Applying national figures on the estimated prevalence of DVA from the CSEW to the population of Herefordshire yields an estimated 3,800 females (7.6 per cent) and 2,100 male (4.1) victims of DVA aged 16-59 in the county during the year ending March 2017, this compares with 7.8 per cent of females and 4.2 per cent of males in England & Wales.

The associated cost to public services in tackling the problem in Herefordshire has been estimated to be £10.8 during the year ending March 2017.

As a result of projected changes in the demographic profile of the county, there is estimated to be a five per cent reduction in the number of females who will have experienced DVA over the next 20 years and a three per cent reduction in the number of male victims.

It is estimated that 6.5 per cent (2,100) of children aged 0 to 15 lived in a household where an adult has been subjected to DVA in Herefordshire during the last year and that around a quarter of children, both locally and nationally, have lived in a household affected by DVA at some time in

their life to date. These prevalence rates are only likely to serve as a conservative estimate but provide added value over the existing available evidence.

Herefordshire's prevalence rate of DVA related crimes reported by West Mercia Police during the year ending March 2017 was 13.5 per thousand population (all ages). This is lower than for England & Wales (18.3) and the West Mercia area as a whole (19.2). Some offences and incidents have more than one victim as there were a corresponding 3,071 victims (16.2 per thousand population). If Herefordshire's police reported figures were as high as the estimated prevalence of DVA from the CSEW would mean an estimated additional 3,832 victims to those the police are presently aware of.

There is a continuing upward trend in the numbers of referrals received by the Herefordshire branch of West Mercia Women's Aid, of which around 70 per cent each year, for the last three years, are referred on to a particular service such as group work, Helpline, Safety Planning Support, 1-2-1 support and refuge. There are around 1.5 children per household accessing a service.