

Report to help tackle domestic homicides and suicides published

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Domestic homicides and suicides are an enduring problem although figures remained relatively stable during lockdown

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The 'Domestic Homicides and Victim Suicides During COVID-19 Pandemic' report is the first to be produced by the groundbreaking domestic homicide project, established by the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council, working with the national policing vulnerability knowledge and practice programme (VKPP).

The research carried out by the project, created in May 2020 through Home Office funding, is the first of its kind in England and Wales and aimed to establish the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on domestic homicides and suicides following domestic abuse, learn lessons from every tragic death and seek to prevent future deaths.

The project found that COVID-19 acted as an 'escalator and intensifier of existing abuse' in some instances, with victims less able to seek help. It also concluded COVID-19 had not 'caused' domestic homicide, but it has been 'weaponised' by some abusers as both a new tool of control over victims, and – in some cases – as an excuse or defence for abuse and homicide.

Bernie O'Reilly, interim CEO of the College of Policing, responded to the findings of the report:

This groundbreaking research greatly adds to our knowledge and understanding of domestic homicides and will prove vital in helping improve our responses to risk to keep victims, particularly women, safer.

Everyone deserves to feel secure in their homes and relationships and we must ensure policing takes every opportunity to further reduce the number of domestic homicides and suicides.

Although figures have remained stable during the pandemic it is totally unacceptable that between two and three women are killed by their partner or ex-partner every week.

The College has developed a range of products to support forces, including working with domestic abuse charities to produce specialist training for officers and staff, which is being delivered in nearly 30 forces. We have also developed an updated domestic abuse risk assessment tool with academics, practitioners and survivors. This focuses on assisting police responders to identify coercive and controlling behaviour. This behaviour has very significant adverse effects on the quality of life of its victims, but is also an indicator of risk of serious physical harm.

This report is the first publication from the Domestic Homicide Project, and every organisation in this sector is determined to use the information gathered to develop more effective responses to domestic abuse and prevent these tragic deaths from occurring.

You can [read the full report](#) on the NPCC website.

Tags

Domestic violence COVID-19