



Student name: Ketrina Bardhi or Bardi

Student ID:2324052

Module name: Independent Project

Module code:BMHP6020

Supervisor's name:Jolly Nwankwo

The Role of Health and Social Care Professionals in Supporting Women Victims of Domestic Abuse



Introduction:

Domestic abuse is a serious health and social care issue that affects the safety, physical health, mental wellbeing and independence of women. It can involve physical violence, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, financial control and controlling behaviour. Women experiencing domestic abuse may suffer from injuries, anxiety, depression, fear and social isolation (Papas et al., 2023). Health and social care professionals play a vital role in recognising the warning signs of abuse, protecting victims and providing emotional and practical support. However, many women face barriers to

Aim:

The project aims to explore how health and social care professionals can support women who are victims of domestic abuse by identifying abuse signs, providing emotional and practical support, safeguarding victims, collaborating with agencies, and facilitating access to services to enhance their safety, wellbeing, and independence.

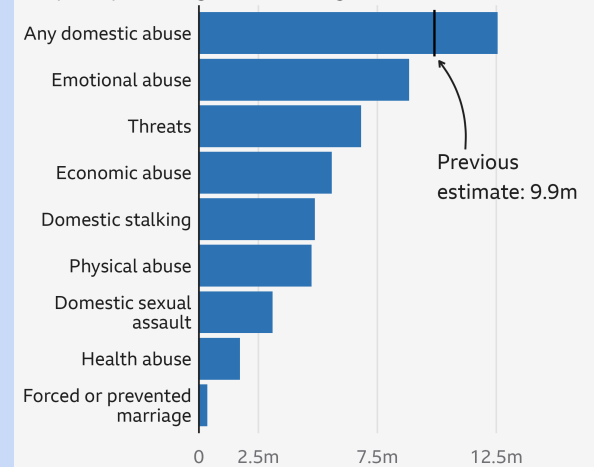


Objectives:

- To identify the main forms, signs and impacts of domestic abuse experienced by women.
- To explore how health and social care professionals recognise, respond to and safeguard women experiencing abuse.
- To examine emotional, practical and multi-agency support available for women victims.
- To consider barriers to seeking help and suggest improvements to safety, access and support

Different types of domestic abuse

People experiencing abuse since age 16 (millions)



There are no previous estimates of the prevalence of specific domestic abuse types.

Source: Crime Survey of England and Wales (ONS)

BBC

(Agerholm, 2025)

Data Analysis method:

- This project will use secondary research to explore how professionals support women victims of domestic abuse.
- Reliable sources will include government guidance, NHS documents, ONS reports, books, journals and support organisations.
- Sources from 2016 to 2026 will ensure current information.
- Keywords include safeguarding, emotional support, disclosure barriers, referrals and multi-agency working.

seeking help, including fear, shame, financial dependence and concerns about their safety. Effective safeguarding, early identification, confidential support and cooperation between healthcare services and support organisations are essential to protecting women and preventing further harm (Home Office, 2022). This project aims to explore how health and social care professionals can better support women experiencing domestic abuse, improve their safety and wellbeing, and help them regain independence.



Methodology:

Research Approach: This project will use a qualitative secondary research approach to explore how health and social care professionals support women experiencing domestic abuse.

Research Design: A literature review will be used to examine existing research and professional guidance.

Research Purpose: To understand how

services.



Ethical considerations:

Ethical Approval: Not required, as this project uses published secondary research and does not involve human participants.

Confidentiality: Respecting the privacy and personal information of women experiencing domestic abuse.

Safeguarding: Recognising the importance of protecting women from harm and promoting their safety (NHS England, 2026).

Academic Integrity: Avoiding plagiarism and using correct Harvard referencing.

Reliable Sources: Using trustworthy information from NHS reports, government publications and academic journals.

Sensitivity: Discussing domestic abuse respectfully, without blaming or judging victims.



Data collection:

Research Method: Secondary research using information from existing published studies and reports.

Databases: Searching Google Scholar and ProQuest Central for relevant academic studies.

Reliable Sources: Using NHS reports, government publications, ONS statistics and Women's Aid reports.

Research Focus: Exploring how health and social care professionals support women experiencing domestic abuse (NHS England, 2026).

professionals recognise abuse, respond to victims and provide safeguarding support.

Data Analysis: Thematic analysis will be used to identify common themes, patterns and challenges in professional practice.

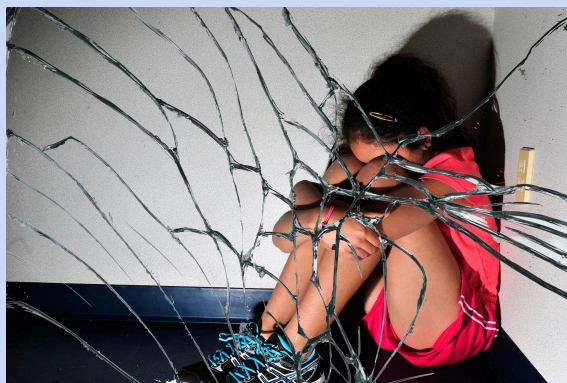
Key Themes: Safeguarding, emotional support, professional responsibilities, barriers to seeking help and multi-agency working.

Research Limitations: Possible differences in research findings, limited evidence and bias in published studies will be considered.



Accuracy: Presenting research findings honestly and without changing information.

Bias: Recognising possible bias and limitations in published research.



Resources:

- Government guidance and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 will explain legal duties and professional responsibilities.
- NHS safeguarding documents and ONS reports will show referral processes and the scale of abuse.
- Academic sources from 2016 to 2026, using ProQuest Central and Google Scholar, will provide reliable evidence.
- Women's Aid/Refuge websites, a laptop, internet, Word/Google Docs and Harvard guidance will be used.

Keywords: Domestic abuse, safeguarding, emotional support, women's safety, referrals and multi-agency working.

Inclusion Criteria: Selecting relevant studies published between 2016 and 2026.

Exclusion Criteria: Excluding outdated, unreliable and irrelevant sources.

Data Quality: Checking the reliability and relevance of information to understand domestic abuse and the support available to women (ONS, 2024).



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References:

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