

#WHATICANDO

The role of MPs in tackling domestic abuse

Completed with ComRes

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Foreword

Domestic abuse is a silent killer - we don't always see it and we don't talk about it.

This survey shows that over a third of MPs have been made aware of a constituent experiencing domestic abuse within the last month, and that 3 in 5 MPs say that they have heard of a family member or friend experiencing domestic abuse.

Hestia is a London based charity working with adults and children in crisis - supporting them to recover and live the lives we all take for granted. Each year we work with thousands of survivors and provide over 30 safe houses across the city. The scale of domestic abuse makes it a public health crisis which affects all of us.

Maybe it is your sister who seems a bit unsure and puts you off when you suggest popping in to see her or your friend who always needs to check with a partner before agreeing to anything, or the kids who have just moved into the school and seem very frightened, or the friend who loses one job after another or seems to have many GP appointments and tests which don't find any underlying medical problem.

We all know victims and survivors - we don't always recognize them.

Bright sky is an important development which can reach many more victims than our service can provide for. It is the first tool of its kind and I am immensely proud that Hestia has played such a vital part in its development



Patrick Ryan
Chief Executive, Hestia

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About UK SAYS NO MORE

UK SAYS NO MORE seeks to unite and strengthen a diverse community of members of the public and organisations nationwide to actively take a stand against domestic abuse and sexual violence under one powerful, visual symbol. The campaign provides open-source tools and resources for individuals and organisations to take action and get involved in making a difference. Together we can challenge the myths and misconceptions around these issues, share resources and information, and ultimately work together to make real positive change.

About Hestia

We deliver services across London and the surrounding regions, as well as campaign and advocate nationally on the issues that affect the people we work with. Last year we supported more than 9,000 men, women and children. This includes victims of modern slavery, women and children who have experienced domestic abuse, young care leavers and older people. From giving someone a home, to helping them to get the right mental health support, we support people at the moment of crisis and enable them to build a life beyond a crisis. We are supported by more than 460 volunteers across London who provide specialist skills such as art therapy, yoga, IT, gardening and cooking, as well as befriending and fundraising.

We are proud to be the home of UK SAYS NO MORE, bringing together a diverse coalition of individuals, charities, businesses and public sector organisations to campaign for an end to domestic abuse and sexual violence.

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Methodology



Objectives: The key aim of this research was to explore when MPs were last made aware of a constituent, family or friend, or a colleague being a victim of domestic abuse

Method: ComRes surveyed 150 MPs using a combination of paper and online surveys.



Base: 150
Conservative: 53
Labour: 79
SNP: *8
Other: *10



Fieldwork dates: 11th May - 14th June 2018

Interpretation: Data has been weighted by party and region to be representative of the House of Commons.



With a sample size of 150 MPs, the margin of error on results at a 95% confidence level is ± 7.02 . Differences of less than this should be treated as indicative.

Findings marked with an asterisk (*) indicate low base size. These results should be treated with caution.

Executive Summary

Constituent



Over a third of MPs (35%) report being made aware of a constituent having experienced domestic abuse within the last month, and a further one in five report having been made aware of this in the last week (20%) or 3 months (21%). Overall then, a clear majority of MPs report having been made aware over the course of the last 3 months of a constituent having experienced domestic abuse. The difference between the responses of Conservative MPs and Labour MPs to this statement are not significant.

Friends & Family



Two in five MPs (39%) say that they have never heard of a family member or friend experiencing domestic abuse. A similar proportion (37%) report that they have but that this was over a year ago. Conservative MPs are 13 percentage points more likely than Labour MPs to say that they have never been made aware of a friend or family member having been a victim of domestic abuse (47% vs. 34%).

Colleague

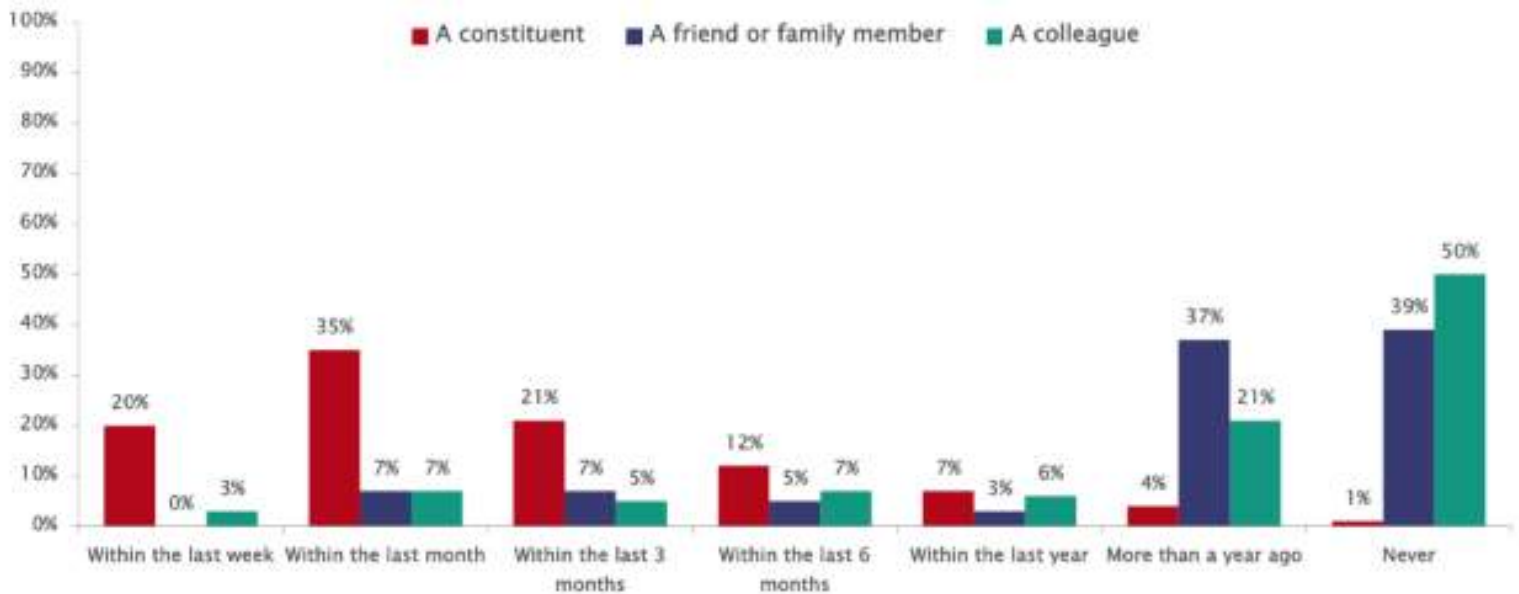


Half of MPs (50%) say that they have never heard of a colleague experiencing domestic abuse, with a further one in five (21%) reporting that they have but that this was over a year ago. Conservative MPs are twice as likely as Labour MPs to say that they have never been made aware of a colleague having been a victim of domestic abuse (66% vs. 32%). Male MPs are also significantly more likely than female MPs to say that they have never been made aware of this (54% vs. 38%).

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Findings

Over a third of MPs report awareness within the last month of a constituent having experienced domestic abuse, but half of MPs say they have never heard of a colleague experiencing this.

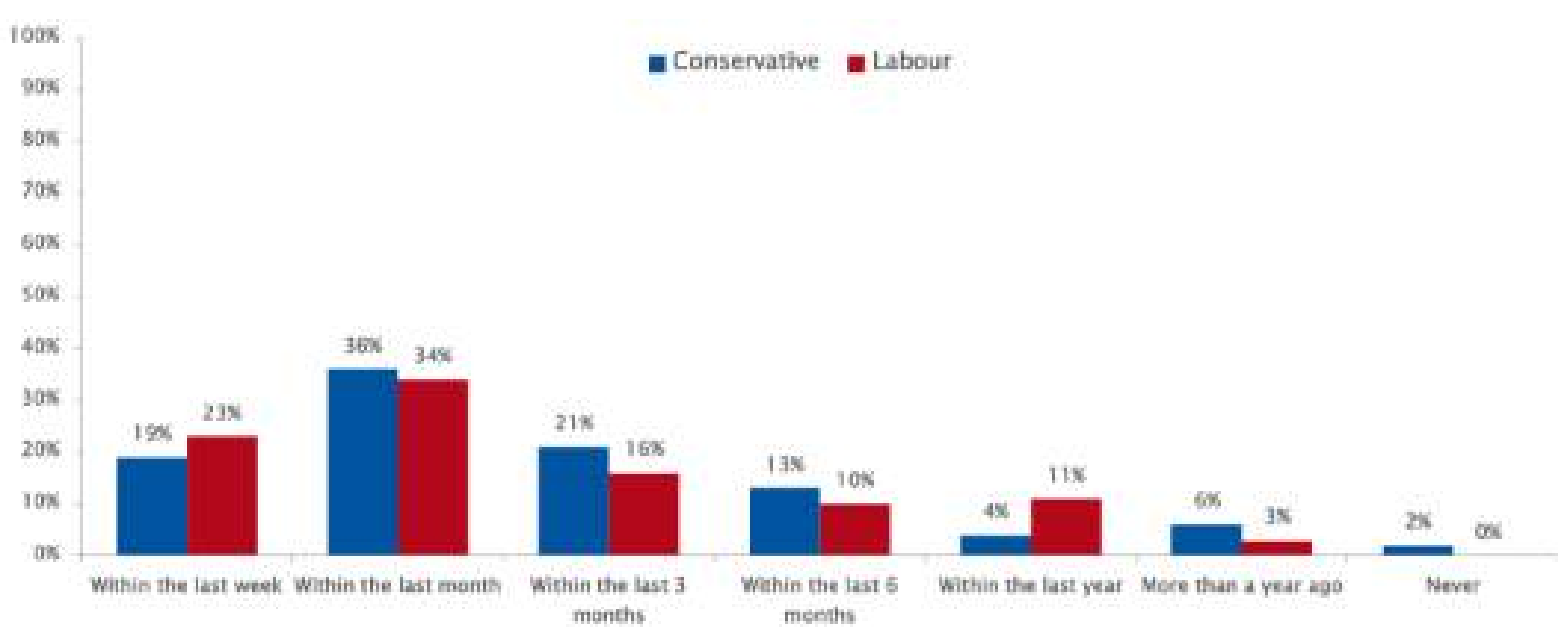


- MPs are most likely to report that they were made aware that a constituent was a victim of domestic abuse within the last month, with a third (35%) saying this. Indeed, one in five MPs (20%) report that they were made aware that a constituent was a victim of domestic abuse within the last week, and only 1% say they have never heard this of a constituent.
- Less than one in ten MPs (7%) say that they were made aware that a friend or family member was a victim of domestic abuse within the last month, as is also true in the case of a colleague (7%). Around two in five MPs (37%) say that it was more than a year ago when they were last made aware of a friend or family being the victim of domestic abuse, with a similar proportion (39%) saying that they have never heard this.
- Exactly half of MPs (50%) report that they have never been made aware of a colleague being a victim of domestic abuse, though a notable minority (21%) say they have been but that this happened more than a year ago

Q. When was the last time that you were made aware (i.e. told, witnessed or suspected) that a person belonging to one of these groups was a victim of domestic abuse? A constituent / A friend or family member / A colleague. Base : All MPs (n=150).

Findings

A similar proportion of Conservative MPs and Labour MPs respond that they have been made aware within the last week or month of a constituent having experienced domestic abuse.

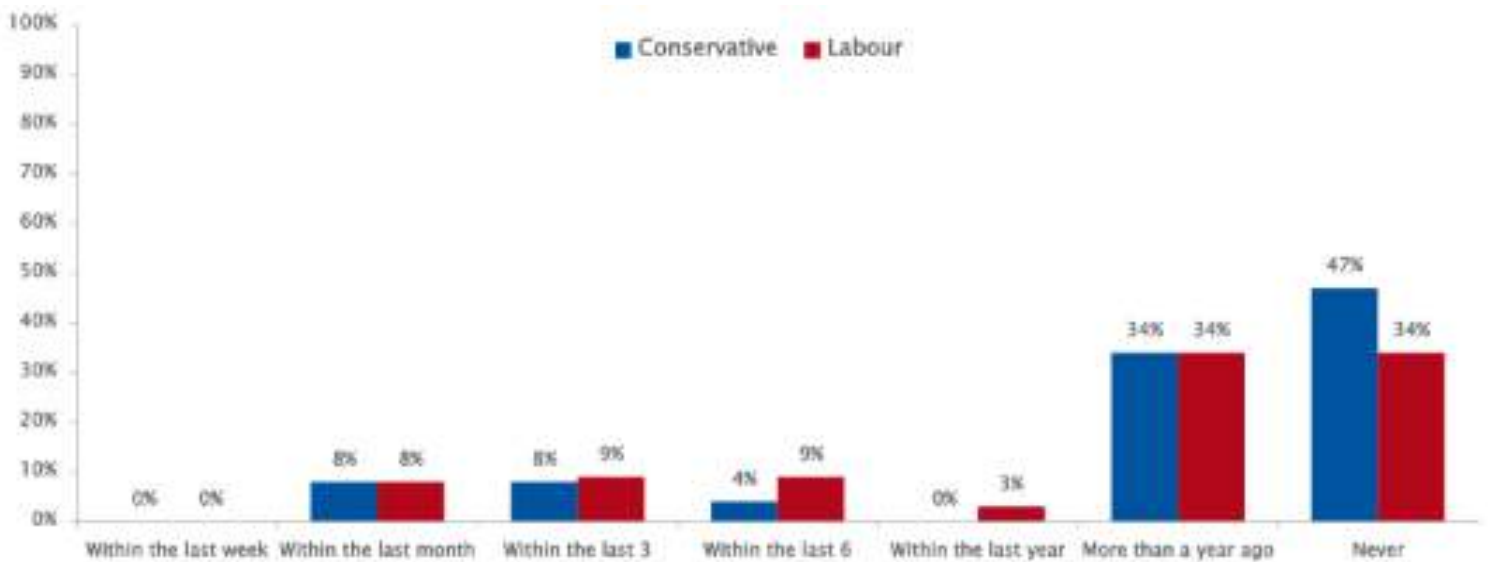


Conservative and Labour MPs respond similarly when asked about the last time that they were made aware of a constituent having been a victim of domestic abuse. While Labour MPs are slightly more likely than Conservative MPs to respond that they have heard this within the last week (23% vs. 19%), Conservative MPs are slightly more likely to report that they have done so within the last 6 months (36% vs. 34%). These differences are not statistically significant however, with only one exception: Labour MPs are more than twice as likely as Conservative MPs to say that they were made aware of a constituent having been a victim of domestic abuse within the last year.

Q. When was the last time that you were made aware (i.e. told, witnessed or suspected) that a person belonging to one of these groups was a victim of domestic abuse? A constituent. Base : all Conservative MPs (n=53); all Labour MPs (n=79).

Findings

Conservative MPs are significantly more likely than Labour MPs to say that they have never been made aware of a friend or family member having been a victim of domestic abuse.

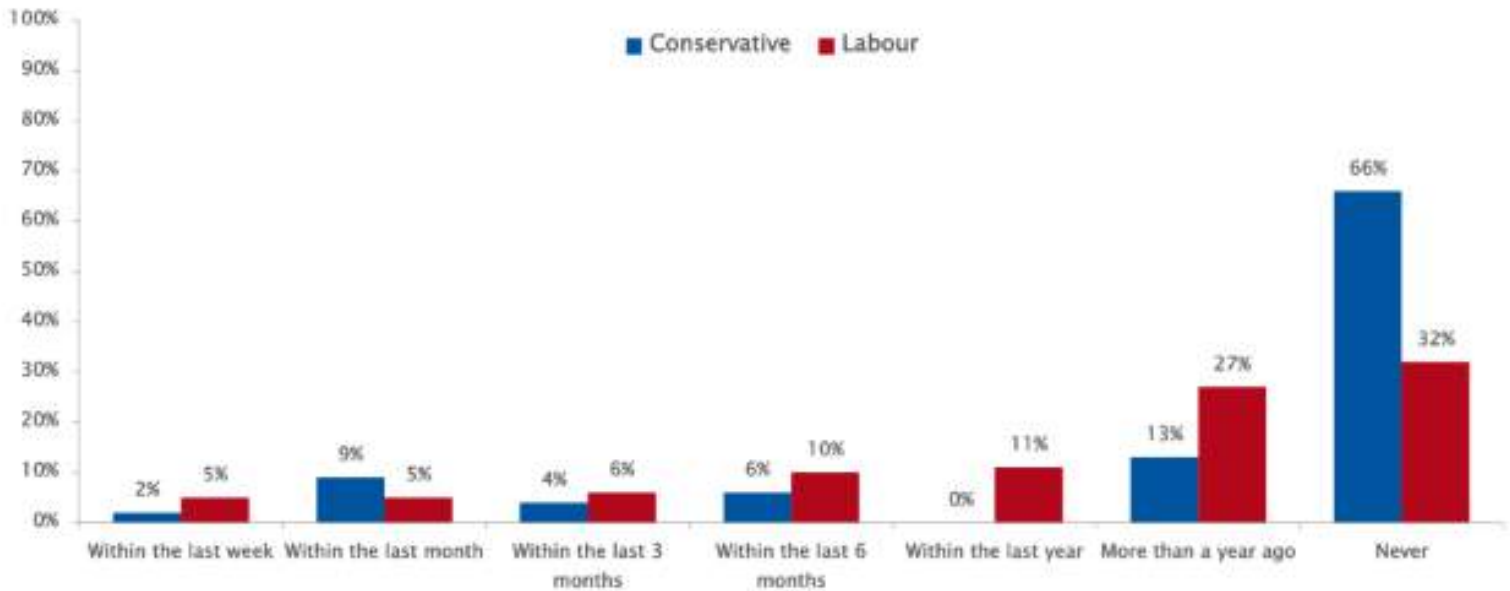


- Again, Conservative and Labour MPs respond similarly when asked about the last time that they were made aware of a friend or family member having been a victim of domestic abuse. For example, one in ten of both parties say that they have been made aware of a friend or family member having been a victim of domestic abuse within the last month (8% Conservative, 8% Labour).
- However, it is notable that Conservative MPs are 13 percentage points more likely than Labour MPs to say that they have never been made aware of a friend or family member having been a victim of domestic abuse (47% Conservative, 34% Labour).

Q. When was the last time that you were made aware (i.e. told, witnessed or suspected) that a person belonging to one of these groups was a victim of domestic abuse? A friend or family member. Base : all Conservative MPs (n=53); all Labour MPs (n=79).

Findings

Conservative MPs are twice as likely as Labour MPs to say that they have never been made aware of a colleague being a victim of domestic abuse

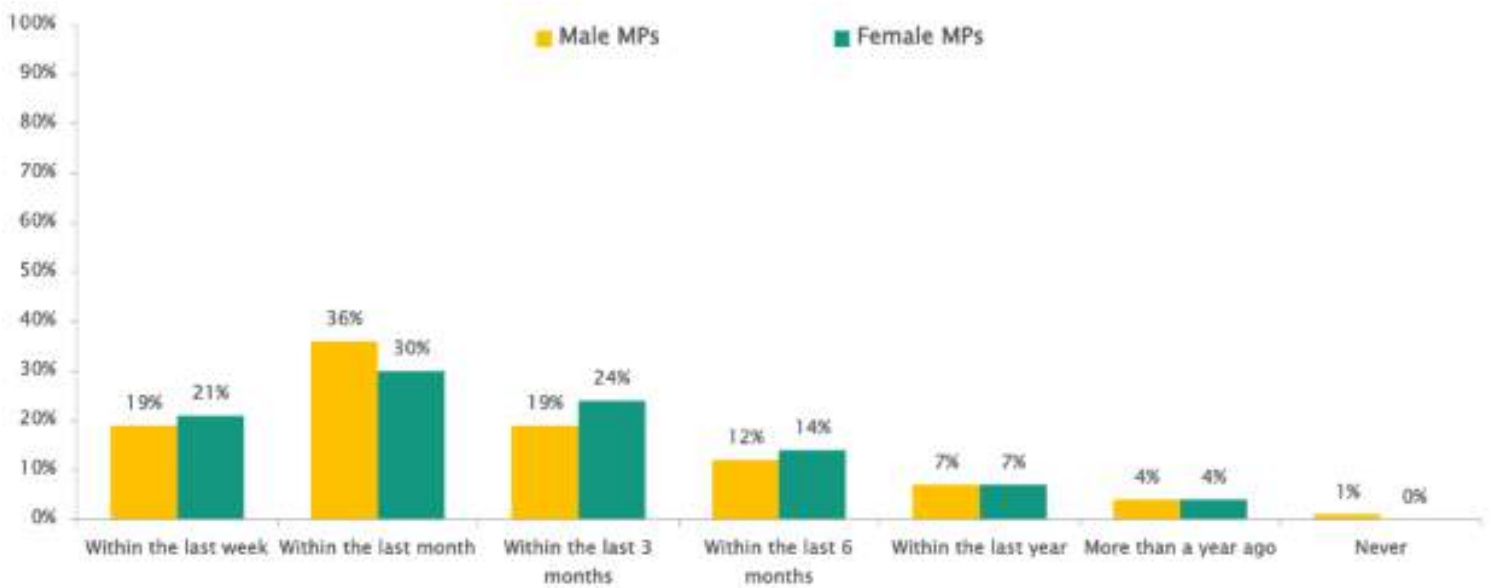


- Conservative MPs are twice as likely as Labour MPs to report that they have never been made aware of a colleague being a victim of domestic abuse (66% vs. 32%). Furthermore, Labour MPs are also significantly more likely than Conservative MPs to say they have been made aware of this within the last year (11% vs. 0%) or more than a year ago (27% vs. 13%).

Q. When was the last time that you were made aware (i.e. told, witnessed or suspected) that a person belonging to one of these groups was a victim of domestic abuse? A colleague. Base : all Conservative MPs (n=53); all Labour MPs (n=79).

Findings

A similar proportion of male and female MPs respond that they have been made aware within the last week or month of a constituent having experienced domestic abuse

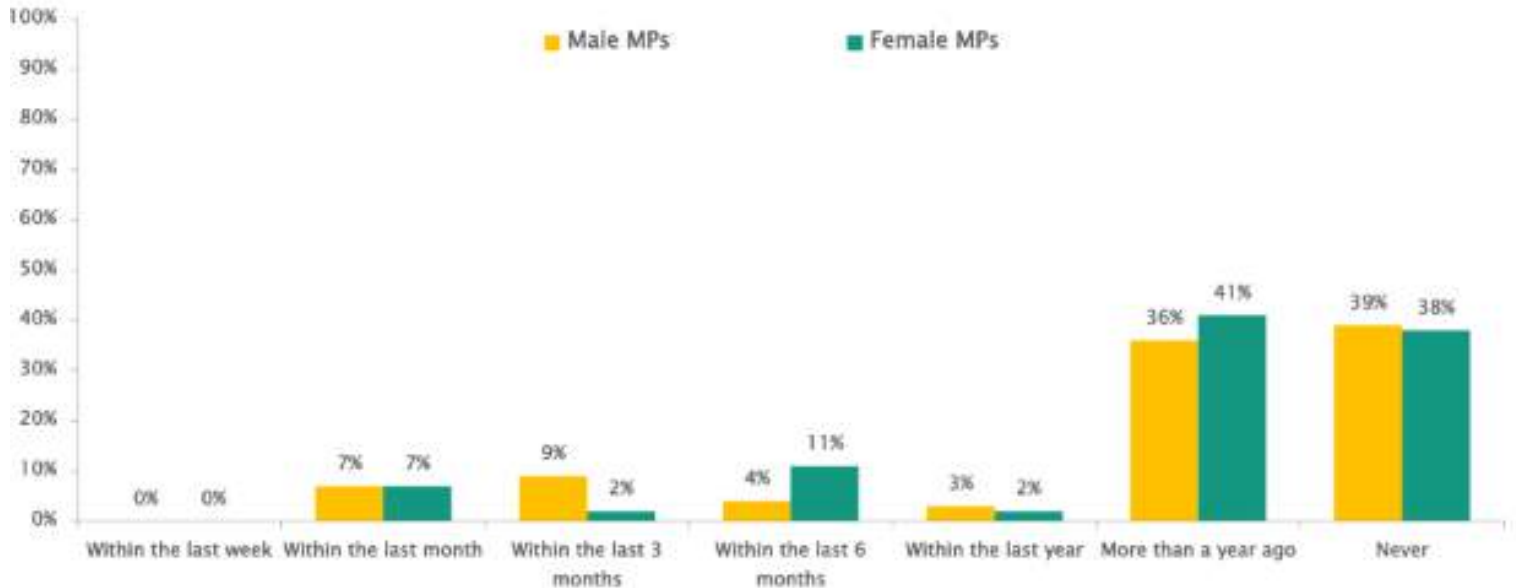


- Male and female MPs respond similarly when asked about the last time that they were made aware of a constituent having been a victim of domestic abuse. For example, 7% of both male and female MPs say that they have been made aware of this within the last month.

Q. When was the last time that you were made aware (i.e. told, witnessed or suspected) that a person belonging to one of these groups was a victim of domestic abuse? A constituent. Base : all male MPs (n=110); all female MPs (n=40).

Findings

A similar proportion of male and female MPs respond that they have been made aware within the last week or month of a friend or family member having experienced domestic abuse

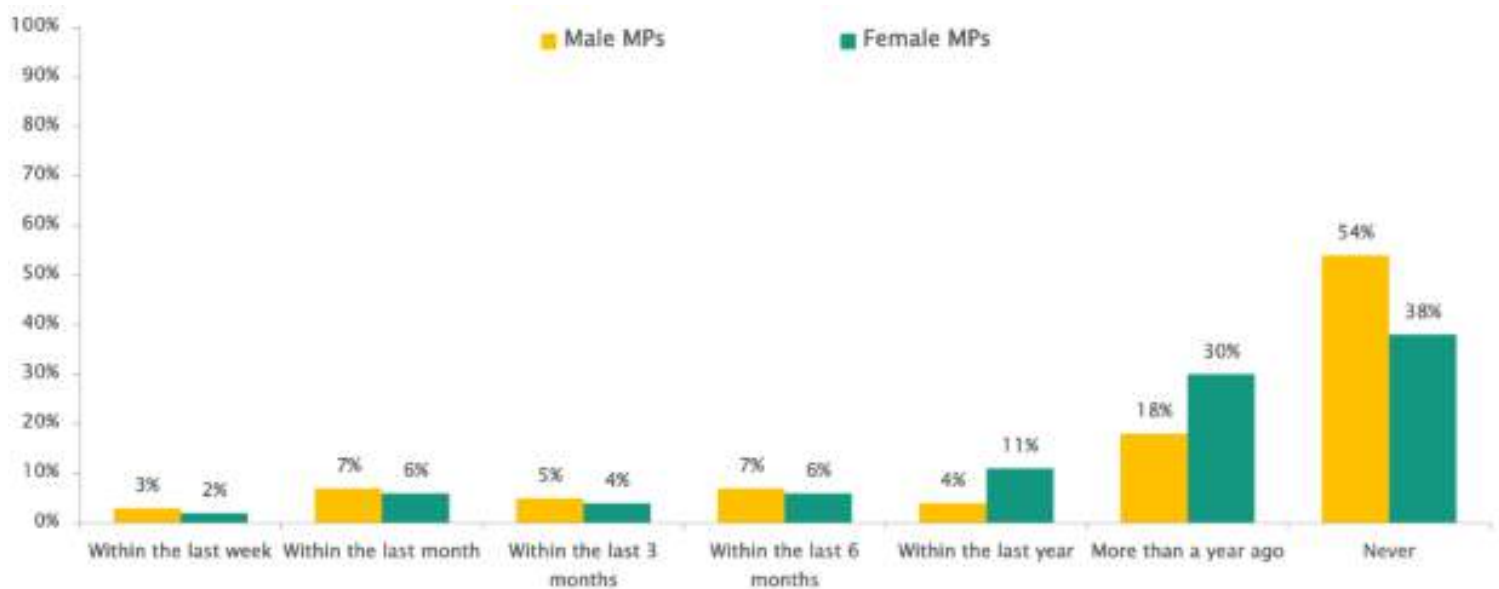


- Overall, male and female MPs respond similarly when asked about the last time that they were made aware of a friend or family member having been a victim of domestic abuse. For example, 7% of both male and female MPs say that they have been made aware of a friend or family member having been a victim of domestic abuse within the last month.
- While male MPs are significantly more likely than female MPs to report that they were made aware of a friend or family member having been a victim of domestic abuse within the last 3 months (9% vs. 2%), female MPs are more likely than male MPs to report that this is the case within the last 6 months (11% vs. 4%).

Q. When was the last time that you were made aware (i.e. told, witnessed or suspected) that a person belonging to one of these groups was a victim of domestic abuse? A friend or family member. Base : all male MPs (n=110); all female MPs (n=40).

Findings

Male MPs are considerably more likely than female MPs to say they have never been made aware of a colleague having experienced domestic abuse



- Male MPs are significantly more likely than female MPs to say that they have never been made aware of a colleague having experienced domestic abuse (54% vs. 38%). Female MPs are also significantly more likely than male MPs to say that they have been made aware of this more than a year ago (30% vs. 18%).
- However, within the bracket of the last 6 months and under, male and female MPs respond similarly when asked about the last time that they were made aware of a colleague having been a victim of domestic abuse. For example, 5% and 4% of male and female MPs respectively say that they have been made aware of this within the last 3 months.

Q. When was the last time that you were made aware (i.e. told, witnessed or suspected) that a person belonging to one of these groups was a victim of domestic abuse? A colleague. Base : all male MPs (n=110); all female MPs (n=40).

The role of Bright Sky

On average 1 in 3 people Brits will know a friend, family member or colleague who is experiencing domestic abuse. Many will be asked to help.

Leaving an abusive relationship is incredibly difficult and at the point of separation the risk of significant harm increases drastically. Survivors have told us that the support that they needed changed throughout their journey. In the first instance, many victims will turn to those they trust to talk about what they are experiencing within their relationships and to seek reassurance that this behavior is unacceptable. Bright Sky's relationship assessment tools are useful in understanding what risks are posed and will recommend the type of support a victim may benefit from.

Each victim's experience is different. Survivors have told us that their ability to access support and assistance at the right time was hindered by not knowing what support was available. Bright Sky's find your nearest support service links the user with over 600 specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence services and helplines. Bright Sky's videos explain what to expect if you contact the police, enter a refuge or work with a specialist domestic abuse or sexual violence service.

Bright Sky's myth buster interactive questionnaire, sexual violence case studies and our links to online resources such as the UK SAYS NO MORE website allow the user to understand and explore their legal options.





Bright Sky is a free to download mobile app providing support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship; their families, friends and colleagues.

The app is also designed to be used by specialist and non-specialist practitioners and other employers, and for anyone looking for information about issues around domestic abuse such as online safety, stalking and harassment and sexual consent.

The Bright Sky app is available on Android devices from the Google Play Store, and on iOS phones from the Apple App Store.

The app features:

- The FIND HELP tool – a unique UK-wide directory of specialist domestic abuse.
- support services, whereby users can contact their nearest service by phone from the app, searching by area name, postcode or their current location.
- A secure My Journal tool, where incidents of abuse can be logged in text, audio, video or photo form, without any of the content being saved on the device itself.
- Questionnaires to assess the safety of a relationship, plus a section on dispelling myths around domestic and sexual abuse.
- Information for anyone wishing to learn more about domestic abuse, including the different types of support available, steps to consider if leaving an abusive relationship, and how to help a friend affected by domestic abuse.

Contact details and the ability to call national helplines providing support for those affected by domestic and sexual abuse across the UK.

In partnership with

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