IN CHURCHES TOO: Church Responses to Domestic Abuse – a case study of Cumbria

Researchers from Coventry University and the University of Leicester asked **438 CHURCHGOERS** in Cumbria, north-west England, how the church was responding to domestic abuse.

- **42.2%** experienced at least one abusive act in a CURRENT and/or PREVIOUS RELATIONSHIP, on at least one occasion
- **1 in 4** of the sample have experienced at least one abusive act in a CURRENT RELATIONSHIP
- **Only around 2 in 7** churchgoers consider their church to be adequately equipped to deal with a disclosure of domestic abuse
- **71.0%** were aware of domestic abuse in their COMMUNITY
- **But only 37.6%** thought it was a problem in their CHURCH

Rates of prevalence for each category of abuse are higher for women than men

- **WOMEN WERE MORE THAN FOUR TIMES** as likely as men to report having been SEXUALLY ABUSED once or more
- **No men reported being PHYSICALLY ABUSED** on a weekly basis, whereas **3.2% OF WOMEN did**
- **WOMEN WERE ALMOST FOUR TIMES** as likely as men to report experiencing FINANCIAL ABUSE several times a year
- **WOMEN WERE MORE THAN TWICE** as likely as men to report experiencing SPIRITUAL ABUSE several times a year

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Experiences of domestic abuse

Of those who’d experienced an abusive act, 57.4% of women considered themselves to have experienced domestic abuse compared to only 16.7% of men.

90.8% of cases involve male perpetrators and 9.2% involve female perpetrators.

56.7% involve Christian perpetrators and 43.3% involve non-Christian perpetrators.

Just over half of cases involve families with children under the age of 18 living at home while the respondent was being abused.

Women typically reported experiencing a higher number of impacts of domestic abuse than men:

- Current relationships:
  - Women: 4.5 impacts
  - Men: 1.8 impacts

- Previous relationships:
  - Women: 5.9 impacts
  - Men: 3.6 impacts

Seeking help from the church for domestic abuse:

- Would seek support from church:
  - 42.9%
- Would not seek support from church:
  - 42.9%

Over half of the sample had sought support outside of the church.

Fewer than 1 in 4 women (23.8%) and 1 in 6 men (16.7%) who have previously sought help for domestic abuse did so from a church.

Older people are less likely to report having experienced domestic abuse:

- 38%
- 53%

Over 60s less likely to report having experienced abuse (37.7%), compared to Under 60 years old (52.9%).

Which of the following are you aware of in your church? (% of people selecting each option)

- Domestic abuse has been talked about in a sermon: 57.1%
- Prayers have been said for people experiencing domestic abuse: 28.3%
- The church has donated money or goods to a domestic abuse charity: 22.3%
- The church works with a local refuge, Safe House or domestic abuse charity: 14%
- There are posters and/or leaflets in church about domestic abuse: 52.5%

This happens regularly: 13.3%
This happens sometimes: 15.9%
This happens rarely: 15.9%
I am not aware of this happening at all: 13.3%