Domestic Abuse, Mental Health, and Justice Study: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ONLINE SURVEY.

SECTION 1: Justice System Interactions

Questions in this section ask about your contact with the justice system and your perceptions of different services. Unless specified, all questions are optional. When responding to free text questions, please remember not to share information that might identify you.

1. Have you ever been in contact with the justice system in relation to domestic abuse (e.g. police, courts, legal advice) – Required.

- Yes (continue to Q2)
- No (Skip to section 1B)
- Prefer not to say (Skip to 1B)

2. How long ago was your most recent contact with the justice system in relation to domestic abuse?

- I'm currently still accessing it
- Less than 6 months ago
- More than 6 months ago but less than 12 months ago
- Between 12-24 months ago
- More than 2 years ago
- More than 5 years ago
- More than 10 years ago

3. How did you make first contact with the justice system?

- Self referral
- Referred by another service (please state which…)
- Signposted by another service (please state which…)
- Court ordered
- Other (please state)

4. Which of the following have you been in contact with in relation to domestic abuse? (Select all that apply)

- Contacted the police
- Received legal advice
- Applied for a protective order

- Attended criminal court
- Attended family court
- Drug treatment services
- Mental health services
- Social services
- Witness or victims services
- Domestic abuse support worker/IDVA
- Decided *not* to engage with any part of the justice system
- Other (please specify)

5. At the time you engaged with the justice system, what were you hoping for?
(Select all that apply)

- Immediate safety
- Protection for children
- Justice or accountability (e,g, to prove that the abuse happened)
- To make things righ for your family
- Emotional validation
- Practical support (e.g., help with housing, benefits, or daily needs)
- Financial support (e.g. help with housing costs or other financial needs)
- Legal outcome (e.g., non-molestation order, prosecution)
- Advice or guidance
- Not sure
- Other (please specify)

6. How would you rate your experience with the following services in relation to domestic abuse? *(5-point scale: Very positive – Very negative – N/A)*

- Police
- Legal aid or solicitor
- Family court
- Criminal court
- Drug treatment services
- Mental health services
- Social services
- Witness/victim services
- Domestic abuse support worker / IDVA
- Other support worker (please specify)
- Interpreter or language support (if applicable)

7. To what extent did you agree that
(5-point Likert scale: Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)

- Your experiences were believed and taken seriously

- Your safety was prioritised
- The professionals you spoke to understood domestic abuse
- The system made things easier for you
- The information you received was accurate
- You had enough information to make informed decisions
- Communication was clear and consistent
- You were given information about the Victim's Code
- You were able to access services or support over a timeframe that matched your needs.

SECTION 1B (Shows only if the respondent selects "No" or "Prefer not to say" to justice system contact.)

1Bi. Have you ever considered engaging with the justice system (e.g. reporting to police, applying for legal orders)?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

1Bii. What were your main reasons for *not* engaging with the justice system?
(Select all that apply)

- Advice from others not to report
- Concern for your personal safety
- Concern for your children's, family's, or pet's safety
- Fear of not being believed or making things worse
- Shame or embarassment
- Pressure from your family or community not to report
- Concern that information from my police or health records would be used against me.
- Concern about immigration status
- Not knowing how to access support or start the process
- Waiting lists were too long
- Cost or a lack of legal aid
- Lack of childcare
- Language or communication barriers
- Not recognising the experience as abuse at the time
- Thinking the abuse would not be taken seriously
- Not having the mental capacity or energy to engage at the time
- Feeling that too much time had passed since the abuse to take action.
- Having had a previous negative experience with the system
- Services not being trauma-informed
- Services not being culturally competent
- Other

1Biii. In hindsight, is there anything that might have made it easier or safer for you to engage with the justice system?
(Select all that apply)

- Help with childcare or other practical responsibilities.
- Access to emergency accommodation that accepts pets
- Services that were easier to access (e.g., closer location, more flexible hours)
- Better information or advice about my options
- Someone to clearly explain the process (including what would happen in court)
- Clear information about my rights to access personal or medical records
- Support from someone I trusted
- Support for those close to me (e.g., children, family, pets)
- Support before, during, and after the process
- A safe place to make contact or disclose abuse.
- A trauma-informed police or court process *[information icon to provide definition of trauma-informed[1]]*
- Services that are culturally sensitive and understood my background.
- Choice about who I spoke to (e.g., same gender/culture/background)
- Access to a local specialist domestic abuse service
- Free legal advice or legal aid
- Mental health support
- Nothing would have made me feel safe enough
- Other (please specify)

1Biv. Did you access any *non-legal* sources of support during or after the abuse?

- Yes
- No

If yes, optional follow-up: Please select any services or people who supported you.

- Friends or family
- General practitioner (GP)
- Mental health service (e.g. CMHT, IAPT, crisis team)
- Substance use service
- Therapist or counsellor (private or NHS)
- Domestic abuse charity or helpline (e.g. Refuge, Women's Aid, Respect)
- Community-based organisation (e.g. faith-based, LGBTQIA+, culturally specific)
- Support group (peer-led or professionally facilitated)
- Housing support service
- Women's Centre or similar specialist support hub
- IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advocate) or caseworker not connected to legal process

- School, college, or university-based support
- Online forum or support network
- Workplace support or employee assistance programme
- Other (please specify)
- Prefer not to say

1Bv. How do you feel now about your decision *not* to engage with the justice system?

- I feel it was the right decision for me
- I'm unsure / mixed feelings
- I regret not engaging

(Skip to section 4).

SECTION 2: Support and Service Gaps

1. During your involvement with the justice system, did you receive support for any of the following?
(Select all that apply)

- Mental health via NHS or private provider (e.g., psychiatrist, community mental health team)
- Counselling or therapy (NHS, private or other provider)
- Other emotional wellbeing support (e.g., peer support, holistic therapies)
- Support for substance use or other addictions
- Advocacy and psychosocial support from a specialist service (e.g., domestic abuse service, women's centre, faith-based or culturally-specific service, LGBTQIA+ organisation).
- Housing support
- Financial or benefits support
- Safety planning or risk assessment
- Support with child contact or safeguarding
- Help understanding navigating legal processes (e.g, court accompaniment, paperwork)
- I was not offered any support
- I chose not to accept support
- Other (please specify)

2. For each - how helpful was this form of support overall?

- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Not helpful

3. Were there any services you wanted or needed but could not access?
(Select all that apply)

- Mental health care via the NHS
- Counselling or therapy
- Other emotional wellbeing support
- Support for substance use or other addictions
- Advocacy and psychosocial support from a specialist service
- Safe accommodation or housing support
- Financial or benefits support
- Safety planning or risk assessment
- Support with child contact or safeguarding
- Support for children
- Support for wider family
- Help understanding and navigating legal processes
- Legal representation
- Legal advice
- Legal aid
- Specialist domestic abuse support
- Advocacy or caseworker support
- Interpreter or translation support
- Other (please specify)

4. Which of the following made it harder to get the support you needed?
(Select all that apply)

- Advice from others not to report
- Concern for your personal safety
- Concern for your children's, family's, or pet's safety
- Fear of not being believed or making things worse
- Shame or embarassment
- Pressure from your family or community not to report
- Concern that information from my police or health records would be used against me.
- Concern about immigration status
- Not knowing how to access support or start the process
- Waiting lists were too long
- Cost or a lack of legal aid
- Lack of childcare
- Language or communication barriers
- Not recognising the experience as abuse at the time
- Thinking the abuse would not be taken seriously
- Not having the mental capacity or energy to engage at the time
- Feeling that too much time had passed since the abuse to take action.
- Having had a previous negative experience with the system

- Services not being trauma-informed
- Services not being culturally competent
- Other (please specify)
- Prefer not to say

SECTION 3: Mental Health and Wellbeing

1. How did your experience with the justice system affect your mental health?
(Select all that apply)

- Gained a sense of justice or closure
- Felt safer or more protected
- Felt validated or believed
- Felt more empowered or confident
- Improved sleep
- Improved access to support or services
- Reduction in self-blame or shame
- Increased anxiety or fear
- Increased depression or hopelessness
- Flashbacks or trauma symptoms
- Reduction in flashbacks or trauma symptoms
- Sleep problems
- Isolation or reduction in accessing services
- Self-blame or shame
- No change

2. Compared to before your involvement with the justice system, how would you describe your mental health now?

- It has improved
- It has worsened
- There has been no change
- Not sure/too early to say

We know this question may bring up difficult feelings. If you'd like support, you can find a list of organisations at the end of this survey. You do not have to answer this question if you don't want to.

3. Did you feel your mental health needs were recognised and responded to by professionals?

- Yes, fully
- Yes, partially

- No
- I didn't raise any mental health needs
- Prefer not to say

4. Which of the following helped you cope or recover during or after your justice system involvement?
(Select all that apply)

- Counselling, therapy, or other mental health support
- Support from friends or family
- Peer support from other survivors
- A supportive professional (e.g., Independent Domestic Violence Advocate, solicitor)
- Faith or spirituality
- Creative or physical activity
- Holistic therapy
- Rebuilding friends/relationships away from the abuse
- A place that I feel I belong/feel normal
- Restorative justice programmes
- Time and distance from the legal process
- Support for addictions
- Nothing helped
- Other (please specify)
- Prefer not to say

SECTION 4: Reflections and Recommendations

1. In your view, what are the most important changes needed in the justice system to better support survivors?
(Select up to three)

- Improved training for professionals on domestic abuse and trauma
- Procedures that are more centred on survivors' needs and experiences
- Better access to peer-led or survivor-informed support
- Greater transparency about what information is collected and how you can access your own records
- Quicker and more timely court processes
- Easier access to legal aid or free legal advice
- More mental health support before, during, and after legal processes
- Better coordination between different services (e.g., police, courts, social care)
- More support for survivors who are also parents or carers
- Other (please specify)
- Prefer not to say

2. If you could give one piece of advice to someone working in the justice system, what would it be?
(*Optional free-text*)

SECTION 5: About You

1. What is your age range?

- Under 18 (not eligible)
- 18–24
- 25–34
- 35–44
- 45–54
- 55–64
- 65 – 74
- 75 – 84
- 85 – 94
- 95+

2. How do you describe your gender?

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Prefer to self-describe: _____

3. Is your gender the same as the sex you were assigned at birth?

- Yes
- No

4. How would you describe your ethnicity or ethnic background? We understand that no finite list will be perfect and encourage you to select "any other ethnic background" if your preferred option is not selected.

- Arab
- Asian or Asian British (Bangladeshi or Bangladeshi British)
- Asian or Asian British (Chinese or Chinese British)
- Asian or Asian British (Indian or Indian British)
- Asian or Asian British (Pakistani or Pakistani British)
- Any other Asian background
- Black (African or African British)
- Black (Caribbean or Caribbean British)
- Any other Black background

- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (White/White British and Asian/Asian British)
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (White/White British and Black African/Black African British)
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (White/White British and Black Caribbean/Black Caribbean British)
- Any other mixed or multiple ethnic groups
- White (English, Scottish, Northern Irish or British)
- White (Gypsy or Irish Traveller)
- White (Irish)
- White (Roma)
- Any other White background
- Latinx
- Any other ethnic background (Please state)

4. What is your religion or belief?

- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- No religion
- Sikh
- Other (please state)

5. What is your sexual orientation?

- Bisexual
- Gay or lesbian
- Heterosexual
- Other (please state)

6. Are you a parent or a carer?

- Parent
- Carer
- Parent and carer
- Neither

Thank you for sharing your experiences.

We are grateful for your time and the insights you have provided. If you would like to receive a summary of the research findings please contact us on vamhn@kcl.ac.uk

If you would like more information about taking part in a paid focus group (online) or workshop (in person) which will explore these topics in more detail, click here.

If anything in this survey has been distressing, or if you would like support, you can find information and helplines below.

Samaritans: Free to call service 24 hours a day, call them on 116 123.

Shout: If you would prefer not to talk but want some mental health support you can text SHOUT to 85258. Shout officers a confidential 24/7 text service providing support if you are in crisis and need immediate help.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline (Refuge): 24/7 service. Call 0808 2000 247 or go to www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Galop: Helpline for LGBT+ people experiencing abuse or violence, available Mondays and Tuesdays 9.15-8pm and Wednesdays to Thursdays 9.15-4.30pm. The helpline is closed between 1pm-2pm each day. Call them on 0800 999 5428 or go to www.galop.org.uk

Men's Advice Line: Freephone helpline for male victims of domestic abuse, available Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm. Call them on 0808 801 0327 or go to www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Victim Support: Help and support for anyone affected by crime. You can talk to Victim Support whether or not you've reported the crime to the police. Victim Support can support you without the involvement of the criminal justice system. Free to call service 24 hours a day. Call them on 0808 16 89 111 or go to www.victimsupport.org.uk