



Institute For
Addressing
Strangulation

UK Prevalence of Non-Fatal Strangulation

Updated May 2025

ifas.org.uk

contact@ifas.org

Introduction

The aim of this report is to provide an overview of the prevalence of strangulation in the UK, as we currently understand it. It is an updated version of our [2023 UK Prevalence of Strangulation & Suffocation report](#), incorporating new data where available.

It is worth highlighting that data collection across services remains inconsistent. We are therefore limited by the data available and would suggest that in many cases, across contexts, the number of victim/survivors of strangulation may be much higher.

What is strangulation?

Strangulation can be defined as obstruction or compression of blood vessels and/or airways by external pressure to the neck impeding normal breathing or circulation of the blood. Non-fatal strangulation is where such strangulation has not directly caused the death of the victim.

What do we know about strangulation in the UK?

Strangulation is a standalone offence in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

- Strangulation and suffocation became standalone offences in England and Wales in 2022[1], and in Northern Ireland in 2023[2].
- In England & Wales, there were 23,817 reports of strangulation and suffocation made to the police in the first year of the offence being in place[3].

- A 'key findings' report from the Home Office, which examined 124 Domestic Homicide Reviews that took place between October 2019 and October 2020, found that in 25% of homicides, the method of killing was strangulation (the Home Office included asphyxiation, pressure to neck, strangulation, and suffocation in their definition). In this report 80% of the victims were female and 20% male[6].

Strangulation is a common method of killing women

- ONS data revealed that, between April 2010 and March 2021, every year on average 18% of female homicide victims in England and Wales were killed by strangulation or suffocation. In contrast, during the same time period, 6% of male homicide victims were killed by strangulation or suffocation[4].
- The 2025 Femicide Census (an annual report focusing on homicide cases where women are killed by men in the UK) reported that 27% of killings involved strangulation or asphyxiation. Further to this, strangulation or asphyxiation is the second most frequent method of femicide (after homicide by a sharp instrument)[5].

Being a victim of non-fatal strangulation is common in the prior histories of suicides following domestic abuse

- Recent data from the National Police Chiefs' Council Vulnerability and Knowledge Practice Programme (VKPP) report found that 20% of suicides following domestic abuse had been subjected to non-fatal strangulation prior to their death[7].

Charities supporting survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence frequently come across strangulation

- A review of data from Women's Aid showed that 1 in 4 women accessing their community based and refuge services reported having experienced strangulation or suffocation[8].
- SafeLives Insights IDVA dataset 2021-22 recorded that 32% of cases accessing their IDVA services had experienced strangulation[9].
- Almost 19% of people attending St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Manchester who had been assaulted by a partner or ex-partner had experienced strangulation as part of the assault. Of those who experienced strangulation, 96.6% were females[10].

Strangulation during sex is common among young people

- In a 2024 survey of over 2,344 respondents, IFAS found that over a third (35%) of 16-34 year olds reported being strangled/choked at least once during consensual sex and over a quarter (27%) of 16-34 year olds reported having strangled/choked a partner during consensual sex[11].

Strangulation is a global issue

- A systematic review in 2014 reported the lifetime prevalence of women being strangled by an intimate partner to be between 3.0% and 9.7%[12].

What does this mean?

- From the data available it is apparent that there are many incidents of strangulation each year in the UK across different contexts.
- Data collection across services is inconsistent and gaps in opportunities to understand the scale of the strangulation in the UK persist. For example, there is currently no clinical coding for strangulation within the NHS, which means it is not possible to understand the scale of the problem and the number of victim/survivors presenting to healthcare services. Additionally, data from frontline services like the police and charities relies on individuals having reported or been referred to and engaged in services. Consequently, there may be many more survivors of strangulation who do not feature in these datasets.
- We would encourage all services to collect data on strangulation, to understand how patients/clients/service users are impacted by this form of abuse and to assess and adapt their response to strangulation by providing adequate care and support to victim/survivors. Our [Strangulation Data Capture Guidance](#) strangulation data capture guidance provides information on how services might achieve this.
- At IFAS we recently conducted an analysis of 294 online news article titles on strangulation that were obtained across two years [13]. Strangulation is not going away. We will continue to raise awareness, encourage people to talk about strangulation and urge services to ask about strangulation to keep people safe and avoid potential future homicides.

Further Information

- Links to other IFAS resources on website - <https://ifas.org.uk/resources/>
- Links to our articles/blogs - <https://ifas.org.uk/blog/>

References

- 1.Domestic Abuse Act (2021). Section 70 Strangulation or Suffocation.
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/section/70/enacted>
- 2.Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) (2022). Offence of Offence of non-fatal strangulation or asphyxiation.
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2022/19/section/28/enacted>
- 3.IFAS (2024). Strangulation and Suffocation Offences: June 2022 – June 2023 An Analysis of Police Report Data. <https://ifas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Strangulation-and-Suffocation-Offences-June-2022-June-2023-Final-Report.pdf>
- 4.Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2022). Appendix tables: homicide in England and Wales – Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk).
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/appendixtables/homicideinenglandandwales>
- 5.Femicide Census (2025). 2,000 women. <https://www.femicidecensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2000-Women-full-report.pdf>
- 6.Home Office, 2022. Key findings from analysis of domestic homicide reviews. Key findings from analysis of domestic homicide reviews. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-findings-from-analysis-of-domestic-homicide-reviews/key-findings-from-analysis-of-domestic-homicide-reviews#fn:15>
- 7.VKPP (2023).Executive Summary, Findings and Recommendations: Domestic Homicides and Suspected Victim Suicides Year 3 Report (2020–2023).
<https://www.vkpp.org.uk/assets/Files/Domestic-Homicides-and-Suspected-Victim-Suicides-2021-2022/Executive-Summary-Y3-Report.pdf>
- 8.Women’s Aid Annual Audit (2022). THE DOMESTIC ABUSE REPORT 2022 THE ANNUAL AUDIT.
<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/The-Domestic-Abuse-Report-2022-The-Annual-Audit.pdf>
- 9.SafeLives (2022). SafeLives Insights IDVA dataset 2021–22. <https://safelives.org.uk/research-policy/practitioner-datasets/insights-data/>
- 10.White, C., Martin, G., M.A., Schofield, & Majeed-Arissa, R. (2021). ‘I thought he was going to kill me’: Analysis of 204 case files of adults reporting non-fatal strangulation as part of a sexual assault over a 3 year period. Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine, 79. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jflm.2021.102128>
- 11.IFAS (2024). Strangulation during sex in the UK. <https://ifas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Strangulation-During-Sex-in-the-UK-December-2024-4-1.pdf>
- 12.Sorenson, S.B., Joshi, M. & Sivitz, E. (2014). A systematic review of the epidemiology of nonfatal strangulation, a human rights and health concern. Am J Public Health; 104(11): e54–61. doi: [10.2105/AJPH.2014.302191](https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2014.302191).
- 13.IFAS (2025). Media analysis. Pending publication.



Institute For
Addressing
Strangulation

contact@ifas.org.uk
www.ifas.org.uk

Charity Registration No: 1119599