



Institute For
Addressing
Strangulation

Northern Ireland Strangulation and Asphyxiation Offences June 2023 – June 2025



Authors: Dr Zoe Callon, IFAS
Published: August 2026



Contents

Introduction and Methodology	1
Findings	2
Offences by police force area across years	2
Victim Demographics	6
Domestic Abuse Flag	8
Conclusions	9
Recommendations	9
References	10
Appendix	11

Introduction and Methodology

Strangulation and suffocation became stand-alone offences in England and Wales on 7th June 2022 under the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), and the Serious Crime Act (2015). Northern Ireland followed closely behind, on the 26th June 2023, officially enacting its own specific legislation of non-fatal strangulation or asphyxiation under Section 28 of the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

At the Institute for Addressing Strangulation (IFAS), previous reports have been collated using data requested from the Home Office pertaining to the number of these offences recorded by the police in England and Wales in the first three years of legislation (7th June 2022–6th June 2023; 7th June 2023–6th June 2024; and 7th June 2024–6th June 2025), as well as a report comparing the recording of individual police forces and the Home Office reports of strangulation and suffocation in Year 3 (7th June 2024–6th June 2025). These requests were made via the Freedom of Information (FOI) process. The four reports containing those data can be found below.

Year 1: <https://ifas.org.uk/police-data-reports-2024/>

Year 2: <https://ifas.org.uk/police-data-on-strangulation-and-suffocation-offences/>

Year 3- Report 1: <https://ifas.org.uk/strangulation-offences-continue-to-rise-across-england-and-wales/>

Year 3- Report 2: <https://ifas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Strangulation-and-Suffocation-Offences-June-2024-June-2025-Report-2-updated-version.pdf>

Alongside the individual FOI requests made to police forces across England and Wales, an FOI request was made to Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) with the aim of understanding strangulation and asphyxiation cases that have been recorded by this police force. The timeline for data retrieval was from the first two years of Northern Ireland implementation of the strangulation legislation (26th June 2023–25th June 2025). The data will be presented as Year 1 and Year 2 of Northern Ireland's implementation of legislation.

Notes

The data provided by PSNI does not differentiate between type of offence, so the below reported findings contain all cases of non-fatal strangulation and asphyxiation.

If percentages in this report do not add up in a way that would be expected, this is due to rounding the percentages to the nearest whole number which has been done throughout (unless specified otherwise).

Where frequencies are presented, it is acknowledged that this will not reflect the entirety of strangulation and suffocation offences that are perpetrated across Northern Ireland. They merely represent the number of offences that have been reported to and recorded by PSNI.



Findings

Offences by police force area across years

Frequency data from the PSNI for the first two years of legislation is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Frequency data for the number of strangulation and asphyxiation offences recorded by PSNI, for the year 2024–2025, and 2023–2024, respectively.

Police Force Area	2024 – 2025 Number of Offences (% of total offences since legislation introduced)	2023–2024 Number of Offences (% of total offences since legislation introduced)
Northern Ireland	1068 (54%)	906 (46%)

What the PSNI data tell us, is that there is an increase in the number of reported offences in Northern Ireland from Year of the legislation introduction to Year 2.

In addition to the data provided in the above table, it is important to contextualise the data to the population. To do this, the PSNI data will be presented as number of offences per 100,000 people in the respective population. Comparison can be obtained by presenting the PSNI data alongside England and Wales data. This is the only time that England and Wales data will be used in this report, as population size differences in the different counties may lead to findings being misinterpreted.

Population data for Northern Ireland was sourced from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, and England and Wales population data was sourced from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) website (see Appendix 2 for links to respective web pages).

Table 2: Number of offences per 100,000 people in the respective populations of each police force area, rounded to the nearest whole number.

Police Force Area	Number of Offences per 100,000 (2024–2025)	Number of Offences per 100,000 (2023–2024)	Difference between 2024–2025 and 2023–2024 per 100,000
PSNI	55	47	8 ↑
Avon & Somerset	95	83	12 ↑
Bedfordshire	52	60	8 ↓
Cambridgeshire	75	47	28 ↑
Cheshire	95	74	21 ↑
Cleveland	68	61	7 ↑
Cumbria	51	41	10 ↑
Derbyshire	No data provided in 2024–2025	52	No data provided in 2024–2025
Devon & Cornwall	91	81	10 ↑
Dorset	92	79	13 ↑

Findings

(Continued) Offences by police force area across years

(Continued) Table 2: Number of offences per 100,000 people in the respective populations of each police force area, rounded to the nearest whole number.

Durham	68	76	8 ↓
Dyfed-Powys	53	96	43 ↓
Essex	84	62	22 ↑
Gloucestershire	43	34	9 ↑
Greater Manchester	103	88	15 ↑
Gwent	82	No data provided in 2023-2024	No data provided in 2023-2024
Hampshire	65	55	10 ↑
Hertfordshire	61	55	6 ↑
Humberside	90	No data provided in 2023-2024	No data provided in 2023-2024
Kent	95	62	33 ↑
Lancashire	130	68	62 ↑
Leicestershire	54	55	1 ↓
Lincolnshire	No data provided in 2024-2025	69	No data provided in 2024-2025
London, City of	3	1	2 ↑
Merseyside	75	66	9 ↑
Metropolitan Police	77	70	7 ↑
Norfolk	103	100	3 ↑
North Wales	96	No data provided in 2023-2024	No data provided in 2023-2024
Northamptonshire	No data provided in 2024-2025	111	No data provided in 2024-2025
Northumbria	74	93	19 ↓
North Yorkshire	40	24	16 ↑
Nottinghamshire	74	73	1 ↑
South Wales	81	71	10 ↑

Findings

(Continued) Offences by police force area across years

(Continued) Table 2: Number of offences per 100,000 people in the respective populations of each police force area, rounded to the nearest whole number.

South Yorkshire	104	88	16 ↑
Staffordshire	62	58	4 ↑
Suffolk	103	94	7 ↑
Surrey	44	44	=
Sussex	283	66	217 ↑
Thames Valley	53	42	11 ↑
Warwickshire	85	86	1 ↓
West Mercia	85	63	22 ↑
West Midlands	64	73	9 ↓
West Yorkshire	87	76	11 ↑
Wiltshire	83	43	40 ↑

(Note: this is reported on the basis of workday population i.e. the population of the City of London on a typical working day. See Appendix 1 for a link to where this information has been provided from.)

The offence rate per 100,000 people for PSNI for Year 1 (47) and Year 2 (55) fits within the range of offence rates per 100,000 people for England and Wales for both Year 2 and Year 3, which (excluding the City of London) was between 24–111 in 2023–2024 and 35–104 in 2024–2025. The PSNI Year 1 (47) and Year 2 (55) offence rate is slightly lower than the mean of offence rates per 100,000 people for England and Wales for both Year 2 (2023–2024) and Year 3 (2024–2025), which was 66 in 2023–2024 and 74 in 2024–2025. Arrows in the fourth column in Table 2 show the direction of change between the incidence rates per 100,000 people in each police force area between 2024–2025 and 2023–2024. PSNI reported an increase between 2023–2024 and 2024–2025, which aligned with 74% of the police forces that provided data from England and Wales.

Findings

Victim Demographics

The demographic details of the 1974 victims of strangulation and asphyxiation offences recorded since the introduction of legislation in Northern Ireland are presented in Tables 3–6. These data constitute victim sex, age, ethnicity and disability, for both the Year 2 (2024–2025) and Year 1 (2023–2024), respectively.

Table 3: Recorded sex of victim for strangulation and asphyxiation offences in 2024–2025, and 2023–2024, respectively.

Recorded Sex	2024–2025 Frequency (%) (n=1068)	2023–2024 Frequency (%) (n=906)
Female	784 (73%)	681 (75%)
Male	279 (26%)	221 (24%)
Unknown/missing	5 (<1%)	4 (<1%)

For the 2024–2025 data, of the offences where victim sex was known (n=1063), 74% were female and 26% were male. With regard to the 2023–2024 data, of the offences where victim sex was known (n=902), 75% were female and 25% were male. This shows that the frequency of female and male victims for strangulation and asphyxiation offences in Year 1 (2023–2024) and Year 2 (2024–2025) have remained relatively consistent.

Table 4: Recorded age of victim for strangulation and asphyxiation offences in 2024–2025, and 2023–2024, respectively.

Recorded Age	2024–2025 Frequency (%) (n=1068)	2023–2024 Frequency (%) (n=906)
<18	124 (12%)	99 (11%)
18–29	308 (29%)	273 (30%)
30–39	291 (27%)	232 (26%)
40–49	170 (16%)	155 (17%)
50–59	105 (10%)	93 (10%)
60+	65 (6%)	49 (5%)
Unknown/missing	5 (<1%)	5 (<1%)

Similarly to the discussion above regarding victim sex, the frequency for victim age is similar for Year 2 and Year 1.

Findings

(Continued) Victim Demographics

Table 5: Recorded ethnicity of victim for strangulation and asphyxiation offences in 2024–2025, and 2023–2024, respectively.

Recorded Ethnicity	2024–2025 Frequency (%) (n=1068)	2023–2024 Frequency (%) (n=906)
Asian	25 (2%)	12 (1%)
Black	22 (2%)	7 (<1%)
Mixed/other	19 (2%)	11 (1%)
White	901 (84%)	822 (91%)
Unknown/missing	101 (9%)	54 (6%)

For the 2024–2025 data, of the offences where victim ethnicity was known (n=967), 93% of victims were recorded as White. With regard to the 2023–2024 data, of the offences where victim ethnicity was known (n=852), 96% of victims were recorded as White. For comparison, in the ethnicity census data from 2021 (see Reference 1), with regard to ethnicity categories defined by the Central Statistics Office and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (2025), 97% of residences in Northern Ireland identified as White, 2% identified as Asian, and <1% identified as Black.

Table 6: Recorded disability of victim for strangulation and asphyxiation offences in 2024–2025, and 2023–2024, respectively.

Recorded Disability	2024–2025 Frequency (%) (n=1082)	2023–2024 Frequency (%) (n=940)
Learning	21 (2%)	15 (2%)
Long term illness	8 (<1%)	9 (<1%)
Mental health	56 (5%)	81 (9%)
Physical	27 (2%)	39 (4%)
Sensory	2 (<1%)	6 (<1%)
None	419 (39%)	380 (40%)
Victim refused to provide information	9 (<1%)	2 (<1%)
Unknown/missing	540 (50%)	408 (43%)

For the 2024–2025 data, of the offences where victim disability was not recorded as unknown/missing (n=542), 77% of victims were not reported as having a disability. With regard to the 2023–2024 data, of the offences where victim disability was not recorded as unknown/missing (n=532), 71% were not reported as having a disability. This shows that the frequency of victim vulnerabilities for strangulation and asphyxiation offences in Year 1 (2023–2024) and Year 2 (2024–2025) have remained relatively stable.

Findings

Domestic Abuse (DA) Flag

Offence details relating to whether the strangulation and asphyxiation offences recorded were flagged as domestic abuse (DA) are presented in Table 7.

Table 6: Strangulation and asphyxiation offences flagged as domestic abuse offences in 2024–2025, and 2023–2024, respectively.

Offence flagged as domestic abuse	2024–2025 Frequency (%) (n=1068)	2023–2024 Frequency (%) (n=906)
Yes	799 (75%)	697 (77%)
No	269 (25%)	209 (23%)

These data provide additional context to the strangulation and asphyxiation offences that are recorded by PSNI. A similar question was asked regarding whether cases were part of a rape or serious sexual offence investigation. However, PSNI did not provide this context.

Conclusion

Having PSNI provide IFAS with data regarding their first two years of recorded offences since the introduction of their strangulation and asphyxiation legislation is beneficial for comparing the prevalence and demographic details of strangulation offences in another UK country.

However, the lack of suspect data, contextual information, and case outcomes provided by the police force does limit our understanding of strangulation within a Northern Ireland context. The reasons given for the lack of information from PSNI were that the information was not held centrally, meaning that three different departments would have to be involved in the data retrieval process. With the Secretary of State outlining that an FOI should not exceed 18 hours of legislative cost, PSNI suggested that only victim and domestic abuse flagged information could be provided in this timeframe.

The small percentages of data labelled as 'unknown' in most of the categories provided is promising. IFAS's recommendations in previous police recorded offences reports directly highlighted this. This is because in comparison, England and Wales labelled 'unknown' 25% regarding victim ethnicity in the most recent report, compared to PSNI reporting below 10%. That being said, consistency is needed throughout all categories, so the 50% 'unknown' label for victim disability still shows there is work to be done in terms of recording practices.

Overall, the PSNI data shows a similar pattern to the England and Wales data, that strangulation offence reports are rising, and do so within the same range as reported in the other counties in the UK. Furthermore, victim demographics and cases being flagged as domestic abuse incidents have remained similar across the two years of PSNI reporting since the introduction of their legislation.

Recommendations

- Data regarding strangulation offences should be held together in a central system within all police forces to assist with the data retrieval process
- Additional information, including suspect information, contextual information, and case outcomes should be provided to give the full context of strangulation offences
- Strangulation and asphyxiation offences should be separated, to account for the nuances and differences between these types of crimes

We are keen to encourage contact from police forces in Northern Ireland, England, and Wales who would like to develop and better understand the data they hold on strangulation reports: contact@ifas.org.uk.



References

- Reference 1: Central Statistics Office and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. (2025). *Ireland and Northern Ireland – A Joint Census Publication 2021–2022. Ethnicity, Place of Birth, Language, and Religion*. <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpini/irelandandnorthernireland-jointcensuspublication2021-2022/ethnicityplaceofbirthlanguageandreligion/>



Appendix

Appendix 1: Home Office FOI request

1. Please provide the number of reported offences of non-fatal strangulation and/or non-fatal suffocation (separated, if possible) as the principal offence, as per section 75A of the Serious Crime Act (2015) and the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) reported to police in England and Wales from 7th June 2024 to 6th June 2025 – presented by:
 - a) Police force area.
 - b) Age, sex, and ethnicity of the victim(s).
 - c) Age, sex, and ethnicity of the suspect(s).
 - d) Relationship between the victim(s) and suspect(s).
 - e) The outcome for the suspect(s).
2. The number of offences including an offence of non-fatal strangulation and/or non-fatal suffocation (separated, if possible), as part of a different principal offence reported to the police in England and Wales between 7th June 2024 to 6th June 2025 – presented by:
 - a) Principal offence for which the offence of non-fatal strangulation or suffocation is considered with (e.g., Domestic Abuse)
 - b) Police force area
 - c) Age, sex, and ethnicity of the victim(s).
 - d) Age, sex, and ethnicity of the suspect(s).
 - e) Relationship between the victim(s) and suspect(s).
 - f) The outcome for the suspect(s).

Appendix 2: Individual police forces FOI request

1. Please provide the total number of recorded strangulation offences [Domestic Abuse Act (2021, section 70) and the Serious Crime Act (2015, section 75A)] from **7th June 2024–6th June 2025** (inclusive), with the below details (as many as are recorded on your systems) for each case:
 - a) Victim sex and gender
 - b) Victim age
 - c) Victim ethnicity
 - d) Victim disability
 - e) Suspect sex and gender
 - f) Suspect age
 - g) Suspect ethnicity
 - h) Suspect disability
 - i) Relationship between victim and suspect
 - j) Context of the strangulation offence
 - k) Any additional offences at the time of the strangulation offence
 - l) Whether these cases are domestic abuse-flagged
 - m) Whether these cases are part of a rape or serious sexual offence investigation
 - n) Police assigned outcome and additional rationale where available
2. Please also provide as many of the above details (a–n) as possible for any additional cases involving non-fatal strangulation, where this has been flagged/ featured within an alternative offence, but not recorded specifically as an offence of strangulation.



Appendix

Appendix 3: Population data sources and population size used to calculate incidence rates in Table 2

Police Force	Population source	Population size (millions)
PSNI	https://datavis.nisra.gov.uk/population/2024-mid-year-estimates-for-northern-ireland.html	1.93
Avon & Somerset	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/police-forces/avon-and-somerset/	1.73
Bedfordshire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/police-forces/bedfordshire/	0.68
Cambridgeshire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/police-forces/cambridgeshire/	0.86
Cheshire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/police-forces/Cheshire/	1.07
Cleveland	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/police-forces/Cleveland/	0.57
Cumbria	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/police-forces/cumbria/	0.5
Derbyshire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/police-forces/Derbyshire/	1.06
Devon & Cornwall	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/police-forces/Devon-and-Cornwall/	1.79
Dorset	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/police-forces/Dorset/	0.78
Durham	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/police-forces/Durham/	0.64
Dyfed-Powys	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/police-forces/Dyfed-Powys/	0.52



(Continued) Appendix 3: Population data sources and population size used to calculate incidence rates in Table 2

Police Force	Population source	Population size (millions)
Essex	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Essex/	1.86
Gloucestershire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Gloucestershire/	0.64
Greater Manchester	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Greater-Manchester/	2.85
Gwent	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/gwent/	0.6
Hampshire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Hampshire/	2
Hertfordshire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Hertfordshire/	1.2
Humberside	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/humberside/	0.93
Kent	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Kent/	1.87
Lancashire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Lancashire/	1.52
Leicestershire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Leicestershire/	1.11
Lincolnshire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Lincolnshire/	0.77

(Continued) Appendix 3: Population data sources and population size used to calculate incidence rates in Table 2

Police Force	Population source	Population size (millions)
London, City of	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/city-of-London/	0.43 (“Workday population”)
Merseyside	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Merseyside/	0.14
Metropolitan Police	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Metropolitan/	8.99
Norfolk	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Norfolk/	0.91
North Wales	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/north-wales/	0.7
Northamptonshire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Northamptonshire/	0.76
Northumbria	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Northumbria/	1.47
North Yorkshire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/North-Yorkshire/	0.82
Nottinghamshire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Nottinghamshire/	1.17
South Wales	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/South-Wales/	1.35
South Yorkshire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/South-Yorkshire/	1.42



(Continued) Appendix 3: Population data sources and population size used to calculate incidence rates in Table 2

Police Force	Population source	Population size (millions)
Staffordshire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Staffordshire/	1.14
Suffolk	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Suffolk/	0.76
Surrey	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Surrey/	1.2
Sussex	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Sussex/	1.72
Thames Valley	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Thames-Valley/	2.43
Warwickshire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Warwickshire/	0.58
West Mercia	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/West-Mercia/	1.3
West Midlands	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/West-Midlands/	2.94
West Yorkshire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/West-Yorkshire/	2.35
Wiltshire	https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/police-forces/Wiltshire/	0.73



Acknowledgements

Funded by the Home Office, the Institute for Addressing Strangulation (IFAS) was established in 2022 to raise awareness of strangulation and suffocation. This includes highlighting the associated risks and dangers, and establishing best practice for professionals working with victims, survivors and their families. Although our work primarily focuses on strangulation, we see the parallels between this and suffocation, and are therefore developing our research and understanding of this area.

IFAS would like to acknowledge the hard work and input from the whole team in their contributions to all research outputs; Bernie Ryan, Professor Cath White, Dr Zoe Callon, Lotte Young Andrade, Emily Owens, Laura Brown, and Niharika (Nika) Noakes.

Lastly, IFAS acknowledges that behind every statistic is a person who has friends, family, thoughts, feelings, dreams and hopes. We hope that all readers accessing our report will recognise the individual impact associated with the statistics we present.