

Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2019: Attitudes to Violence against Women in Scotland

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Attitudes to Violence against Women in Scotland

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Executive Summary

Background and methods

This report presents findings from the 2019 Scottish Social Attitudes survey (SSA) on public attitudes to violence against women in Scotland. The module was funded by the Scottish Government and previously included on SSA in 2014. It was developed to provide a baseline measure of views about violence against women in Scotland against which progress towards the objectives outlined in Equally Safe could be assessed. Building on the findings from the 2014 survey, the 2019 survey findings will be included in future updates to the indicators for the Equally Safe Delivery Plan and will inform future work to tackle violence against women and girls in Scotland.

The Scottish Social Attitudes survey (SSA) is a face-to-face survey which uses a random sample of those aged 16 and over living anywhere in Scotland and is conducted by ScotCen Social Research. Fieldwork for the survey began on 30 August 2019 and ceased on 18 March 2020. The overall sample size was 1,022 completed interviews and the response rate was 41%. All of the questions discussed in this report were in the self-completion section of the survey, completed by 959 respondents, due to the sensitive nature of the topic. The research set out to capture people's views about particular behaviours, rather than their response to the terms commonly used to describe violence against women e.g. domestic abuse, rape, etc. The survey, therefore, made extensive use of scenarios that described particular situations. After each description respondents were asked how wrong they thought the behaviour of the perpetrator was and, in addition, after some of the scenarios they were asked how much harm they thought the behaviour did to the victim.

Sexual violence

The majority of people thought the behaviour of a man raping a stranger (91%) and the behaviour of a man raping his wife (84%) was 'very seriously wrong'. There was a 10-percentage-point increase from 2014 to 2019 in the proportion of people who thought that rape within a marriage was 'very seriously wrong', but no equivalent increase was seen in views on a man raping a stranger. Most people thought that the rape of a stranger (89%) and rape within marriage (80%) caused the woman 'a great deal' of harm, with the proportion believing this about rape within a marriage increasing from 67% in 2014 to 80% in 2019. The figure for the rape of a stranger increased by a more modest 4 percentage points from 85% to 89% between 2014 and 2019.

The behaviour of the woman also had an impact on people's perceptions of the wrongness of the man's behaviour. Having been told that the woman in each scenario had first taken the man into the bedroom and started kissing him, only around two-thirds (67%) of people thought the behaviour of the man who raped a stranger was 'very seriously wrong', while the equivalent figure was only 55% for rape within marriage. These lower figures may be explained by perceptions that the woman is at least partly to blame for what happened in these scenarios. Around

half (49%) rated the behaviour of the woman who was a stranger in the scenario as 'wrong' (a score of at least 5 out of 7 on the scale). The equivalent figure for the woman who was married in the scenario was 38%.

There was an increase between 2014 and 2019 in the proportion of people who thought the man's behaviour was wrong where the woman first invites him into her bedroom and kisses him. In 2014 the proportion who thought rape by a stranger was 'very seriously wrong' in this context was 58%; this increased to 67% in 2019. Similarly, the proportion of people who thought the husband's behaviour in this context was 'very seriously wrong' increased from 44% in 2014 to 55% in 2019. Attitudes to the woman's behaviour in these scenarios shifted to a lesser extent in the same period with the proportion of people who thought the woman's behaviour was 'wrong' (giving a score of at least 5 out of 7 on the scale) in the stranger rape scenario decreasing from 56% to 49%. There were no noticeable changes in views of the wife's behaviour in the scenario between 2014 and 2019.

Views on the rape within marriage scenario differed by age, whether people had experienced unwanted sexual contact, and whether people held stereotypical views on gender roles. Those aged 65 and over were less likely to think the husband's behaviour in the rape within marriage scenario was 'very seriously wrong' (74%) than those aged under 65 (86%). Over 9 in 10 (94%) of those who had experienced unwanted sexual contact thought the man's behaviour was 'very seriously wrong', compared with 83% of those who had not experienced unwanted sexual contact. Those who held stereotypical views on gender roles were less likely to think the man's behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' in both the rape by a stranger and rape within marriage scenarios.

Myths about rape were examined by asking people how much they thought a woman was to blame for being raped if she wears revealing clothing or is very drunk. Just under 7 in 10 (69%) people thought a woman was 'not at all to blame' in both scenarios, which represents a significant increase from 2014 where around 6 in 10 thought the woman was 'not at all to blame' in each scenario. Women were more likely (75%) than men (64%) to say that a woman was 'not at all' to blame if she wore revealing clothes and was raped. Those aged 65 and over, those with no educational qualifications and those who held stereotypical views on gender roles were more likely to think that the woman was to blame for being raped if she was wearing revealing clothes or was very drunk.

Three-fifths (60%) of people disagreed that 'women often lie about rape', while nearly four-fifths (77%) disagreed that 'women who say that they have been raped while they were awake and conscious, but didn't fight back, are probably lying'. A similar proportion disagreed (76%) that 'women who take a while to report that they have been raped are probably lying'. Just over a quarter (28%) agreed that 'rape results from men being unable to control their need for sex', while 49% disagreed. The level of belief in the two myths about rape that appeared in both 2014 and 2019 was shown to have declined significantly. In 2014, around a quarter (23%) agreed that 'women often lie about rape'; this declined by 15 percentage points by 2019 when 8% of people agreed with this statement. Similarly, the proportion of

people who agreed that 'rape results from men being unable to control their need for sex' declined between 2014 and 2019 from 37% to 28% respectively.

Domestic abuse: Verbal and physical abuse

Over 7 in 10 (72%) thought a man taking out his stressful day at work on his wife by putting her down/criticising her was 'very seriously wrong' compared with only around half (51%) who thought the same when the perpetrator was a woman. However, the vast majority of people thought that the behaviour was 'wrong' (a score of at least 5 out of 7 on the scale), regardless of the gender of the perpetrator or the victim: 94% thought the man's behaviour was 'wrong' and 91% thought the behaviour was 'wrong' when the woman was the perpetrator. Views in this area did not change significantly between 2014 and 2019.

A higher proportion of people thought this verbal abuse did 'a great deal' of harm when the victim was a woman (66%) than when the victim was a man (44%). Women (58%) were more likely than men (43%) to think a woman often putting down her husband was 'very seriously wrong', and men were less likely (36%) than women (52%) to think a 'great deal of harm' is done to male victims of verbal abuse.

Physical abuse was considered to be more seriously wrong than verbal abuse, with more than 9 in 10 (93%) believing that a man slapping his wife, and around 8 in 10 (81%) believing a woman slapping her husband, was 'very seriously wrong'. These attitudes have not changed significantly since 2014, regardless of the gender of the victim or perpetrator. While 9 in 10 (90%) thought a woman being slapped by her husband caused her 'a great deal' of harm, only around 7 in 10 (71%) thought the same level of harm is done to a man who is slapped by his wife. The proportion thinking 'a great deal' of harm is done to the male victim in this scenario increased from 62% in 2014 to 71% in 2019, whereas the equivalent figure for the female victim did not change significantly.

Men were less likely (74%) than women (88%) to think it was 'very seriously wrong' for a woman to slap her husband. Women were also more likely to think that physical abuse is harmful to the male victim, with 79% of women thinking that it does 'a great deal' of harm to the man compared with 62% of men who thought it did so.

Domestic abuse: controlling behaviour

Attitudes towards controlling behaviour were explored through scenarios on financial control, trying to control what someone wears and excessive monitoring. People were most likely to consider financial control as 'very seriously wrong', with just over two-thirds (68%) saying that a husband insisting on looking at his wife's bank statements without showing her his bank statements was 'very seriously wrong', while the equivalent figure for a man controlling what his wife wears was 55%. A fifth (20%) of people thought a man texting his wife to ask where she is and when she will be home was 'very seriously wrong', while over two-fifths (42%) considered it 'very seriously wrong' when the husband texted multiple times throughout the evening. In comparison, 14% thought it was 'very seriously wrong'

for a woman to send a text asking her husband when he would be home, with fewer than 3 in 10 (27%) saying it was 'very seriously wrong' for a woman to send her husband multiple texts throughout the evening.

There was a significant increase from 39% in 2014 to 55% in 2019 in the proportion thinking it was 'very seriously wrong' for a husband to control what his wife wears, while there were no significant changes in the same period regarding the question on financial control.

Differences in responses by gender were evident. Women were more likely (71%) than men (64%) to consider financial control to be 'very seriously wrong', and were also more likely (62%) than men (46%) to describe the behaviour of a man who controls what his wife wears as 'very seriously wrong'. Younger people were less likely to consider excessive monitoring to be wrong: around a quarter (27%) of those aged 18 to 34 thought a man texting his wife multiple times throughout the evening was 'very seriously wrong' compared with half (50%) of those aged 65 and over.

A man controlling what his wife wears was thought to be less wrong when it was stated that the man had recently found out his wife had had an affair. Three in ten (30%) thought that it was 'very seriously wrong' for a man to tell his wife to change her outfit if he had recently found out she had had an affair, whereas 55% thought this was 'very seriously wrong' when an affair was not mentioned. The proportion thinking the behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' when the woman had recently had an affair increased by 9 percentage points from 21% in 2014 to 30% in 2019.

A majority of respondents thought that financial control (77%) and a husband sending multiple texts throughout the evening to his wife (68%) caused a 'great deal' or 'quite a lot' of harm to the wife. Women were more likely than men to think these behaviours caused a 'great deal of harm': 47% of women compared with 31% of men in the case of financial control, and 36% of women compared with 20% of men in the case of excessive monitoring.

Sexual harassment

People were asked how wrong they considered three forms of sexual harassment to be: wolf-whistling by a group of strangers, sexual harassment in the workplace, and stalking by an ex-boyfriend. Sexual harassment in the workplace was the most likely to be considered 'very seriously wrong' (45%), while the equivalent figures for a group of men wolf-whistling and a man sending unwanted gifts to his ex-girlfriend were 39% and 30% respectively. The proportion considering the behaviour of the group of men wolf-whistling to be 'very seriously wrong' increased by 14 percentage points from 25% in 2014 to 39% in 2019, and the proportion thinking the behaviour of the ex-boyfriend sending unwanted gifts was 'very seriously wrong' increased by 11 percentage points from 19% to 30% in the same period.

An overwhelming majority (94%) of people considered the behaviour of a man who put naked pictures of his ex-girlfriend on the internet to be 'very seriously wrong' in 2019. This compared with 88% in 2014. There was also an increase of 5

percentage points between 2014 and 2019 in the proportion who thought the man's actions in this scenario did 'a great deal' of harm to the woman. Meanwhile three-quarters (75%) thought that social media stalking was 'wrong' (a score of 5 or more on the scale), with just over 3 in 10 people (31%) describing this behaviour as 'very seriously wrong'.

A man telling a sexist joke was considered to be less serious than the examples of sexual harassment which were asked about in 2019. Only a quarter (25%) of people considered this to be 'very seriously wrong', though almost two-fifths (38%) said they would tell their friend it was wrong to make the sexist joke.

Women (95%) were somewhat more likely than men (92%) to consider the behaviour of the man who put naked pictures of his ex-girlfriend on the internet to be 'very seriously wrong', and were around twice as likely (50%) as men (26%) to say they would be 'very likely' to tell their friend he was wrong to make a sexist joke.

Commercial sexual exploitation

People were asked about four types of commercial sexual exploitation: a man paying for sex with a woman, an adult watching pornography at home, a group of men going to a strip club, and a man offering a woman the spare room in his flat in return for sex. The man offering a spare room in his flat in return for sex was considered to be the most seriously wrong among these four types of commercial sexual exploitation, with over four-fifths (83%) considering this to be 'very seriously wrong'. Just under two-fifths (38%) thought it was 'very seriously wrong' for a man to pay a woman for sex; around a fifth (21%) thought a group of men going to a strip club was 'very seriously wrong', while a similar proportion (20%) considered an adult watching pornography to be 'very seriously wrong'. A higher proportion of people thought the behaviour of an adult watching pornography (27%) was 'not wrong at all' than thought it was 'very seriously wrong', the only example of commercial sexual exploitation where this was the case.

Over half (53%) of people thought that a man paying for sex with a woman does her 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of harm, and a similar proportion (56%) thought that paying for sex should either 'definitely' or 'probably' be against the law. Around a quarter (26%) of people agreed that 'most women who become prostitutes could easily choose a different job if they wanted to', while 44% disagreed with this statement. The proportion of people agreeing with the statement declined by 11 percentage points from 37% in 2014 to 26% in 2019.

In 2019, 27% of people thought it was 'not wrong at all' for an adult to watch pornography, an increase on the proportion who said the same in 2014 (21%). Attitudes towards a group of men going to a strip club also changed in this time, with 21% considering this to be 'very seriously wrong' in 2019 compared with 14% who did so in 2014. In 2019, a quarter (25%) of people thought that watching pornography is a 'normal part of growing up' for teenage boys but the equivalent figure for teenage girls was only 15%.

There were key differences by gender, with women (60%) more likely than men (47%) to say that paying for sex did either 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of harm to the woman, and women also more likely (61%) than men (50%) to think that paying for sex should be illegal. Women were also more likely than men to think it is 'very seriously wrong' for an adult to watch pornography (27% compared with 14%), more likely than men to think it is 'very seriously wrong' for a group of men to go to a strip club (26% compared with 15%), and more likely than men to say it is 'very seriously wrong' for a man to offer a woman his spare room in return for sex (87% compared with 79%).

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Violence against women and girls is one of the most prevalent human rights violations globally, directly affecting around one in three women and girls around the world (ActionAid, 2020). The Scottish Government adopts a broad definition of violence against women and girls which ties in with the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (OCHCR, 1993). The definition refers to ‘a range of actions that harm, or cause suffering and indignity to, women and children’ (Scottish Government, 2020), including:

- physical, sexual and psychological violence in the family, general community or institutions. This includes domestic abuse, rape, incest and child sexual abuse
- sexual harassment and intimidation at work and in public
- commercial sexual exploitation including prostitution, pornography and trafficking
- so called 'honour based' violence, including dowry-related violence, female genital mutilation, forced and child marriages and 'honour' crimes.

Each of the forms of violence incorporated within the Scottish Government definition represent ‘forms of control and abuse of power’ (COSLA, 2010). They are often perpetrated by the same men, with many women experiencing more than one type of violence (Greenan, 2004).

Violence against women and girls is widely recognised as intrinsically linked with inequalities between women and men (OCHCR, 1993), with such violence viewed as both a cause and a consequence of gender-based inequalities (European Commission, 2010) – a perspective adopted by the Scottish Government (Orr, 2007). Recognising violence against women and girls as gender-based highlights the need to see such violence in the context of social structures and perceived gender roles (COSLA, 2010). It also positions violence against women and girls as an issue which the Scottish Government is legally required to act upon as a result of section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 which imposes a duty on public bodies to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Policy initiatives

In 2009 the Scottish Government published ‘Safer Lives: Changed Lives’ (Scottish Government, 2009), which recommended an integrated approach to tackling violence against women and girls involving collaboration between health, education, social care and criminal justice services. This approach is reflected in the Scottish Government’s ‘Equally Safe’ strategy (Scottish Government, 2016), which aims ‘to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls’ by providing a framework for change across four overarching priorities:

- Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls
- Women and girls thrive as equal citizens: socially, culturally, economically and politically
- Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people
- Men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response

The Equally Safe Delivery Plan (Scottish Government, 2017) helps to ensure the ambitions of the Equally Safe Strategy are realised and make a tangible difference. There have been a number of initiatives which have been important in fostering attitudinal change. For instance, the Scottish Government, with key partners, have developed a set of key messages on healthy relationships and consent for anyone working with young people. Other initiatives have included piloting a 'whole school' approach to tackling gender-based violence, awareness raising campaigns and expanding the delivery of national sexual violence prevention programmes.

Legislative developments

A number of key legislative developments have also taken place in this area. The Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016 introduced into legislation for the first time in Scotland the issue of psychological harm as well as physical harm, with any intent to cause either or both recognised as a form of aggravated assault (SCSN, 2016). In addition, the Act created a new offence of disclosing, or threatening to disclose, a photograph or film that appears to show another person in an intimate situation. Following from the publication of the Equally Safe strategy (Scottish Government, 2016) and drawing upon the concept of coercive control (Burman and Brooks-Hay, 2018), the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 includes behaviours which were already criminal and behaviours which were not previously defined as criminal into a single offence. The Act covers a range of behaviours that can comprise a pattern of partner abuse, including physical, psychological and financial abuse. On 5 October 2020, a new Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill was published (Scottish Parliament, 2020b). If passed by Parliament, this would bring in legal powers to have suspected abusers removed from a victim's home, and give social landlords the ability to transfer a tenancy from a perpetrator to the victim of domestic abuse to prevent them becoming homeless.

Meanwhile, the Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) (Scotland) Act 2020 provides additional protection for women and girls at risk from FGM. Under the new legislation, anyone will be able to apply for a protection order if they have concerns that someone is at risk (Scottish Parliament, 2020a).

A further legal development is the Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) (Scotland) Bill which was introduced in November 2019 and passed stage one of the legislative process in October 2020. The Bill will enable victims of

sexual offences to access healthcare and refer themselves for a forensic medical examination without having to go to the police (Scottish Parliament, 2019).

Survey research

Since 2008, the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) has included questions on partner abuse within its self-completion module. The survey asks respondents about their experiences of both physical and psychological partner abuse, both since the age of 16 and in the 12 months prior to interview. SCJS provides robust time series data on partner abuse, enabling an assessment of how trends in abusive behaviour have changed and developed over the last decade in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2019a).

In 2018-19, Police Scotland recorded around 61,000 incidents of domestic abuse in Scotland. More than 4 in 5 incidents (82%) involved a female victim and a male accused (Scottish Government, 2020a). The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) 2016/18 reported 3% of respondents who had a partner, or had contact with an ex-partner, reporting partner abuse (either psychological or physical) in the previous 12 months. Overall, 16% had experienced either psychological or physical abuse at some time since the age of 16 with psychological abuse being more commonly reported than physical abuse; 14% reporting ever having experienced psychological abuse from a partner, 10% ever having experienced physical abuse and 8% having reported experiencing both psychological and physical abuse (Scottish Government, 2019b).

While measuring the prevalence of abusive behaviour represents a vital pillar in the design of policy and practice in this area, understanding public attitudes represents another. This is explicitly recognised within the Equally Safe strategy, which asserts that in order to achieve ‘a strong and flourishing Scotland where all individuals are equally safe and respected, and where women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse’, there is a requirement to understand and change the attitudes that help perpetuate such violence (Scottish Government, 2016).

The Equally Safe Delivery Plan (Scottish Government, 2017) notes that ‘there is increased consensus that the roots of violence against women and girls lie in the attitudes and inequalities that continue to permeate society, and that we will only make progress if we tackle outdated gender stereotypes and we tackle women’s inequality’. It states that evidence about public attitudes that underpin violence helps to both inform interventions and to understand the current position in Scotland and what progress is being made.

In 2014, the Scottish Social Attitudes survey (SSA) included a module of questions on public attitudes to violence against women in Scotland (Reid et al, 2015). This research was designed to fill a gap in the evidence base on attitudes in Scotland towards various forms of violence against women, and to provide a baseline measure of views about violence against women in Scotland against which progress towards the objectives outlined in Equally Safe could be assessed. The Equally Safe Delivery Plan sets out priority actions being taken in response to the findings from this research.

This report presents findings from the SSA 2019 module on attitudes towards violence against women. Building on the findings of the 2014 survey, the majority of questions in the 2019 module were repeated from 2014, allowing us to track how attitudes in Scotland have (or have not) shifted during the course of the past five years. Findings from the 2019 survey will be included in future updates to the indicators for the Equally Safe Delivery Plan and will inform future work to tackle violence against women and girls in Scotland.

There have been some changes in the context within which issues around violence against women have been discussed since the SSA 2014 survey, including prominent movements such as #MeToo, campaigns led by public and third sector organisations in Scotland, including publicising new offences around the posting of intimate images without consent, and the changing nature of social media. SSA 2019 therefore also carried a range of new questions intended to gauge attitudes towards forms of violence against women that were not asked about in 2014, providing for the first time a measure of attitudes in Scotland towards the nature and effect of various forms of commercial sexual exploitation, coercive control, misogyny, sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Methodology and analysis

Run annually by the Scottish Centre for Social Research since 1999, SSA is a face-to-face survey with a computer-assisted self-completion (CASI) section, which uses a random sample of all those aged 16 and over living anywhere in Scotland (including the Highlands and islands). Fieldwork for SSA 2019 began on 30 August 2019 and ceased on 18 March 2020, slightly earlier than planned due to the COVID-19 outbreak.¹ A pause in fieldwork took place for five weeks between 6 November 2019 and 12 December 2019 inclusive due to the General Election.

Due to their sensitive nature, the entirety of the module of questions on attitudes towards violence against women was carried on the CASI section of the interview. This also served to minimise social desirability bias by removing the requirement for respondents to share their answers with an interviewer.²

The SSA 2019 sample size was 1,022 completed interviews with an overall response rate of 41%, from an issued sample of 2,790 addresses.³ Of those 1,022 respondents, 959 completed the CASI component. To enable direct comparison with the data collected by SSA in 2014, those aged 16 and 17 have been excluded from this analysis, reducing this number to 952. Data are weighted in order to correct for non-response bias and over-sampling, and to ensure that they reflect the age-sex profile of the Scottish population. Further technical details about the survey

¹ Fieldwork was scheduled to complete on 5 April 2020.

² Interviewers are all trained to follow the NatCen procedure on 'Disclosure of Harm'. This sets out what to do if an interviewer encounters a situation during an interview where they feel that the safety and wellbeing of an individual could be at risk.

³ This excludes the 295 addresses that were out of scope.

are published in a separate SSA 2019 technical report (Scottish Government, 2019c).

All percentages cited in this report are based on the weighted data and are rounded to the nearest whole number. A percentage may be quoted in the text for a single category that aggregates two or more of the percentages shown in a table. The percentage for the single category may, because of rounding, differ by one percentage point from the sum of the percentages in the table. Differences shown in this publication are calculated using unrounded figures and may differ from the rounded figures shown in the text.

All differences described in the text (between years, or between different groups of people) are statistically significant at the 95% level or above, unless otherwise specified. This means that the probability of having found a difference of at least this size, if there was no actual difference in the population, is 5% or less. The term 'significant' is used in this report to refer to statistical significance and is not intended to imply substantive importance. Further details of significance testing and analysis are included in the separate technical report.

The report explores how attitudes vary by a range of different population characteristics including gender, age, relationship status, and religious identity. However, it is not possible using SSA data to explore differences by ethnicity or sexual orientation, due to the sample size of the survey and the relatively low prevalence of people of minority ethnicities or those not identifying as heterosexual within the Scottish population.

Question design

Collecting data on attitudes to violence against women is not straightforward: we wanted to capture people's views about particular behaviours, rather than their response to the terms commonly used to describe violence against women e.g. domestic abuse, rape, etc. In other words, we wanted to establish whether people felt that particular behaviours were abusive in the first instance rather than being influenced in their answers by descriptors that are recognised as indicating condoned behaviour. The development of the questionnaire for this survey involved ongoing consultation on topics and question wording with both the Scottish Government and relevant stakeholders, and in addition two rounds of testing: 15 cognitive interviews and 50 face-to-face pilot interviews with members of the public.

The survey, therefore, made extensive use of 'vignettes' – scenarios that describe particular situations. After each description, respondents were asked how wrong they thought the behaviour of the perpetrator was, and in addition after some of the scenarios they were asked how much harm they thought the behaviour did to the victim. In asking about the behaviour of the perpetrator, a 7-point 'wrong' scale was used. Specifically, respondents viewed the following scale on the screen and were asked, 'Please choose the number which best describes what you think about the man's/woman's behaviour'.



In 2019, questions used to elicit attitudes to domestic abuse were based on a number of different scenarios covering different types of domestic abuse.⁴ While domestic abuse can occur between partners or ex-partners regardless of whether they are married, cohabiting, or neither and regardless of gender, all the scenarios included in the survey asked respondents to consider a single type of relationship: a married, opposite-sex couple. Marriage was chosen as a proxy for people in a relationship since it is widely recognised and is well-understood across the population. And although behaviours such as these can take place in all forms of relationship, an opposite-sex couple was chosen to enable exploration of views on gender-based violence. Asking people to consider one single relationship type across a range of scenarios also ensures that any observed differences in attitudes to domestic abuse are due to views about the differing behaviours, and not attitudes to different types of relationship.

Factors influencing attitudes: whether people hold stereotypical views on gender roles and experience of gender-based violence

The survey also included three questions intended to help us better understand why people hold the views they do. These were (a) a question designed to elicit whether people had personal experience of gender-based violence and (b) a pair of questions designed to elicit whether people held stereotypical views on gender roles. Those with personal experience of abuse might be expected to be more likely to regard a behaviour as abusive and harmful. In contrast, those with more stereotypical views on gender roles might be thought more willing to tolerate misogynistic views or situations in which a man exercises control over a woman.

Respondents were asked whether they had ever experienced any of the abusive situations described in Table 1.1, each of which refers to a behaviour described in one or more of the scenarios in the survey. This question is not designed to collect data on experience of gender-based violence in the Scottish population, which is already collected in the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (see Survey research section above), but rather is designed to be used in the analysis of the views on the five specific areas of gender-based violence that are explored in this report.

⁴ Domestic abuse, particularly coercive control, is best understood as a course of conduct, which has a cumulative impact. While a number of the questions included on SSA 2019 examine attitudes towards individual incidents, our set of scenarios on persistent text messaging is intended to enable an exploration of differences in perceptions between isolated occurrences and more established patterns of behaviour. The questionnaire design employed here represents a novel approach to addressing attitudes towards controlling behaviour through quantitative survey research. However, it is important to note that coercive control often involves many different kinds of behaviours and strategies being layered on top on one another, and this is not something that this survey explored. Qualitative and mixed-methods research would be needed to develop a more nuanced level of understanding of public attitudes in this area.

SSA 2019 found that overall, 32% of people said they had experienced at least one of these types of behaviour. The most commonly experienced form of abuse, experienced by 15%, was being in a relationship where they felt their partner, husband or wife was ‘regularly trying to stop them doing what they wanted to do’. This was closely followed by being ‘regularly verbally abused, put down or criticised by a partner, husband or wife’, experienced by 14%. These findings were similar to those recorded in SSA 2014, where overall 31% said they had experienced at least one of these types of behaviour and the two most commonly experienced forms of abuse were the same as in 2019.

Table 1.1: Experiences of gender-based violence (%)

	2014	2019
Been in a relationship where you felt your partner/husband/wife was regularly trying to stop you doing what you wanted to do	14	15
Been regularly verbally abused, put down or criticised by a partner, husband or wife	12	14
Been physically attacked or abused by a partner, husband or wife	11	11
Had unwanted sexual contact (e.g. sexual assault, rape)	7	11
Been touched inappropriately by a boss or colleague	5	8
Been a victim of stalking (either in person or online)	5	6
No, none of these	69	68
Don't know/Refused	2	2
Unweighted base	1,428	952

Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion

The survey included two questions designed to measure whether people held stereotypical views on gender roles. The first asked respondents what they would do if they took a 3-year-old boy to a shop to buy a toy and he picked up a princess doll. The second posed the same question if a 3-year-old girl chose a toy truck. In both cases, the answer options were:

Buy it for him/her without saying anything

Buy it, but first try to get him/her to pick a toy that's more common for boys/girls

Make him/her put the doll/truck back and pick a toy more common for boys/girls

Table 1.2 shows that while almost 7 in 10 (69%) said that they would buy the girl a toy truck without saying anything, just under 6 in 10 (58%) said the same about buying the doll for the boy.

Attitudes in this area appear to have shifted considerably since 2014, when just over half (52%) indicated that they would buy the girl a toy truck without saying anything and just two-fifths (40%) said the same about buying the doll for the boy. Nevertheless, the question about the boy continues to be the more likely to reveal a stereotypical outlook on gender roles. Thus, it is that question which we rely on in this report to assess whether there is a relationship between having such an outlook and attitudes towards the various behaviours outlined in the scenarios. Unless otherwise indicated, those described in this report as ‘holding stereotypical views on gender roles’ are those who have stated that they would ‘make him (the boy) put it (a princess doll) back and pick a toy more common for boys’ and those described as ‘not holding stereotypical views on gender roles’ have stated that they would ‘buy it (a princess doll) for him without saying anything’.

Table 1.2: Attitudes to gender roles

	Boy wanting a princess doll (%)		Girl wanting a toy truck (%)	
	2014	2019	2014	2019
Buy it for him/her without saying anything	40	58	52	69
Buy it, but first try to get him/her to pick a toy that’s more common for boys/girls	35	28	33	22
Make him/her put it back and pick a toy more common for boys/girls	24	13	14	7
Don’t know/Refused	1	1	1	1
Unweighted base	1,428	952	1,428	952

Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion

Chapter 2 – Sexual violence

This chapter explores people's attitudes to sexual violence. While sexual violence can take a number of different forms, the focus here is on rape. Similarly to the research carried out in 2014, people were asked about their views on a man raping a woman in different contexts. They were also presented with some common myths about rape.

While rape has been generally understood and defined as sexual intercourse without consent, it was only with the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 that a legal definition of 'consent' was introduced in Scotland. The 2009 Act defines consent as 'free agreement' (SPICE, 2008) and concludes that any 'unreasonable belief' by the perpetrator that the victim consented should not prevent a conviction.

Rape by a stranger and within marriage

Rape within marriage was not made a criminal offence in Scotland until 1982. In this research, as in the 2014 research, we look at attitudes to rape both in the context of a man raping a stranger and a husband raping his wife. This allows us to identify whether views are dependent on whether or not the man and the woman had a pre-existing relationship. Half of the respondents to the survey were presented with a scenario where the rape was perpetrated by someone the victim had just met at a party. The other half were presented with a scenario of a husband raping his wife. Otherwise, descriptions of the actions of the perpetrator and victim were identical across the two scenarios.

The scenario outlining rape by a stranger was as follows:

'Imagine a man and a woman who have just met at a party. They get on well. They go back to the woman's flat and when they get there he kisses her and tries to have sex with her. She pushes him away but he has sexual intercourse with her anyway.'

The scenario outlining rape within marriage was as follows:

'Imagine a married couple have just been at a party. When they go home the man kisses his wife and tries to have sex with her. She pushes him away but he has sexual intercourse with her anyway.'

Respondents were asked **how wrong** they thought the man's behaviour was on a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 was 'not wrong at all' and 7 was 'very seriously wrong' (see [Chapter 1](#) for further details). The scenarios did not use the term 'rape'. Instead, the intention was for people to give their views on the specific behaviour.

Table 2.1 shows that, irrespective of the scenario, almost everyone gave a score of at least 5 on the 7 point scale, indicating that they thought the man's behaviour was 'wrong' (96% said this for the stranger scenario and 95% for the husband raping his wife scenario). Notably, though, people were more likely to think that the behaviour

of a man raping a woman he just met at a party was ‘very seriously wrong’ (91%), giving it a score of 7 on the scale, than thought a husband raping his wife was ‘very seriously wrong’ (84%).

Table 2.1 shows that in the scenario of rape within marriage the proportion who thought the man’s behaviour was ‘very seriously wrong’ increased between 2014 and 2019 from 74% to 84%. There was no equivalent significant increase in the proportion who thought the behaviour of the man raping a woman he just met at a party was ‘very seriously wrong’ between 2014 and 2019. As a result, the gap between the proportion who thought the man’s behaviour was ‘very seriously wrong’ when a man is described as raping a woman he just met at a party and when a husband is described as raping his wife reduced between 2014 and 2019. Whereas in 2014 there was a 14-percentage-point gap, this reduced to 8 percentage points in 2019 (91% believing that the behaviour of the man who rapes a woman at a party was ‘very seriously wrong’ compared with 84% who said the same of the behaviour of a husband who rapes his wife).

Table 2.1: Attitudes towards man raping a stranger / his wife

	Man rapes woman he just met at a party (%)		Husband rapes wife (%)	
	2014	2019	2014	2019
7 Very seriously wrong	88	91	74	84
6	5	3	13	10
5	2	2	6	2
4	1	1	3	*
3	1	1	1	1
2	1	1	-	*
1 Not wrong at all	*	1	1	2
Don't know / Refusal	1	1	3	2
Weighted base	695	505	738	460
Unweighted base	688	497	740	455

Base: All respondents who completed either version B (rape by a stranger) or version A (rape within marriage) of the self-completion

How much harm do people think sexual violence causes?

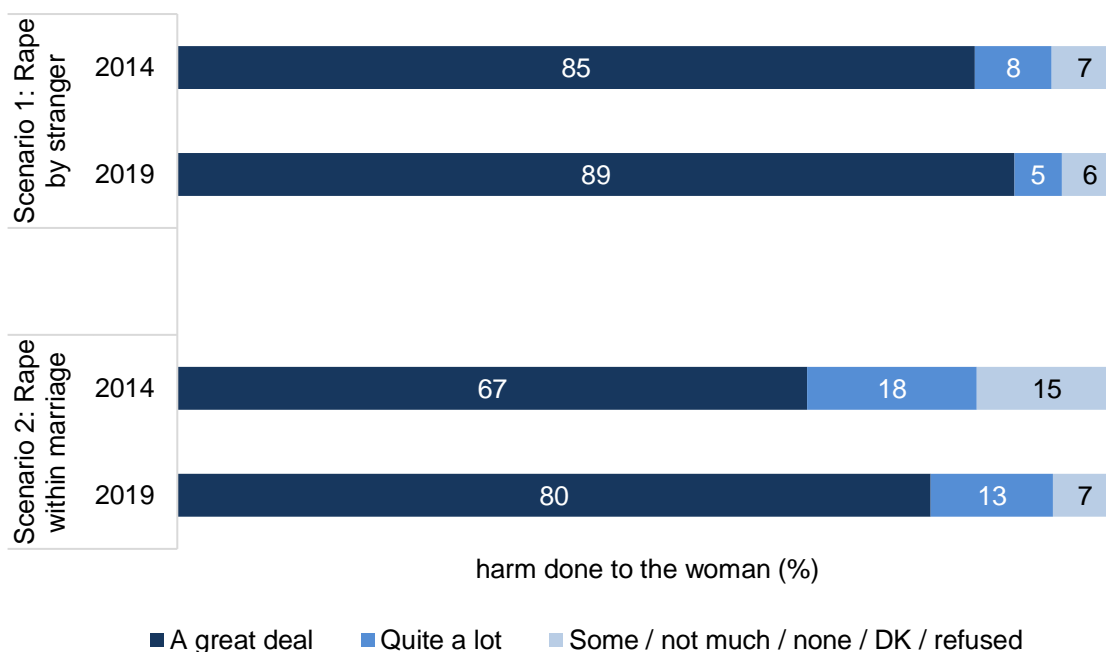
In addition to the question about how wrong or not people thought the man’s behaviour was, they were also asked how much **harm** they thought the man’s

behaviour did to the woman. They could respond on a 5-point scale ranging from ‘a great deal’ of harm to ‘none at all’.

Similarly to the pattern seen in attitudes to the man’s behaviour outlined above, those presented with the scenario of rape by a stranger were more likely than those presented with the scenario of rape within marriage to think the man’s actions caused the woman ‘a great deal’ of harm – 89% and 80% respectively.

The proportion of people who believed ‘a great deal of harm’ had been done to the woman increased between 2014 and 2019. As shown in Figure 2.1 there was a particularly notable increase among those asked about the scenario of a husband raping his wife, from 67% in 2014 to 80% in 2019. The equivalent increase among those asked about a man raping a woman he had just met at a party was more modest, from 85% to 89%.⁵ As a result, when comparing responses to the two rape scenarios the gap had narrowed in the proportion who thought ‘a great deal’ of harm had been done to the woman between 2014 and 2019 (18 percentage points in 2014 compared with 9 percentage points in 2019).

Figure 2.1: Man rapes a stranger / his wife – Belief about the level of harm done to the woman, 2014 and 2019 (%)



Base: All respondents who completed version B (Scenario 1) or version A (Scenario 2) of the self-completion

Does the woman’s behaviour affect attitudes?

Next, respondents were asked to think about the same scenario – i.e. either rape by a stranger or rape within marriage – but in a slightly different context: ‘what if, first of all, **she** had taken him into her bedroom and started kissing him?’

⁵ This increase from 85% to 89% was statistically significant.

As shown in Table 2.2, in the context of the woman first taking the man into the bedroom and kissing him, people were much less likely than previously to say that the man’s behaviour was **‘very seriously wrong’**: just 67% of those asked about a man raping a woman he had just met at a party now said this, while the corresponding figure among those presented with the scenario of rape within marriage was as low as 55%.

This difference may be due to perceptions that the woman is at least partly to blame if she first takes a man into her bedroom and kisses him. Indeed, as shown in Table 2.2, a notable proportion of people thought that the woman’s behaviour was wrong, giving a score of at least 5 out of 7 on the scale: 38% of those presented with the scenario where the rape was conducted by the victim’s husband thought the woman’s behaviour was wrong, while among those presented with the scenario where the perpetrator was a stranger this was even higher, at 49%. Only around one-fifth thought the woman’s behaviour was ‘not wrong at all’ (21% of those asked about rape by a stranger and 22% of those asked about rape within marriage).

Table 2.2: Man rapes a stranger / his wife after she kissed him and took him into the bedroom – Attitudes to man’s and woman’s behaviour (2019)

	Man rapes woman he just met at a party		Husband rapes wife	
	Man's behaviour (%)	Woman's behaviour (%)	Man's behaviour (%)	Woman's behaviour (%)
7 Very seriously wrong	67	21	55	15
6	12	15	17	9
5	6	14	8	14
4	5	11	10	17
3	4	6	4	10
2	1	10	2	10
1 Not wrong at all	3	21	2	22
Don't know / Refusal	2	2	2	2
Weighted base	505	505	460	460
Unweighted base	497	497	455	455

Base: All respondents who completed either version B (rape by a stranger) or version A (rape within marriage) of the self-completion

Comparing the 2019 findings with those from 2014, there was a notable increase in the proportion of people who said the man’s behaviour was ‘very seriously wrong’

where the woman first takes him into the bedroom and kisses him. Between 2014 and 2019 the proportion of those asked about rape by a stranger who thought the man's behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' if the woman had first taken him into the bedroom and kissed him increased from 58% to 67%. Similarly views on whether the husband's behaviour was 'very seriously' wrong if the wife had first taken him into the bedroom and kissed him increased from 44% in 2014 to 55% in 2019.

Views on the woman's behaviour also shifted between 2014 and 2019, although to a lesser extent. Looking at the views of people presented with the scenario of a woman raped by a man she had just met at a party, the proportion of people who thought the woman's behaviour was 'not at all wrong' increased from 13% to 21%. Even so, the proportion who believed her behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' remained unchanged. Furthermore, despite the above mentioned changes in views on the husband's behaviour in relation to the scenario of rape within marriage, there were no notable changes in views on the woman's behaviour in this scenario between 2014 and 2019.

How do attitudes to rape vary between groups?

In this section we look at how attitudes to rape in each of the two scenarios (rape by a stranger and rape within marriage) vary according to the following respondent characteristics and circumstances:

- Gender
- Age
- Education
- Income
- Area deprivation⁶ (as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation)⁷
- Religious identity
- Marital status
- Experience of unwanted sexual contact (e.g. sexual abuse or rape)
- Whether they held stereotypical views on gender roles

⁶ There were no significant differences by area deprivation on attitudes to rape or on myths on rape discussed later in this chapter.

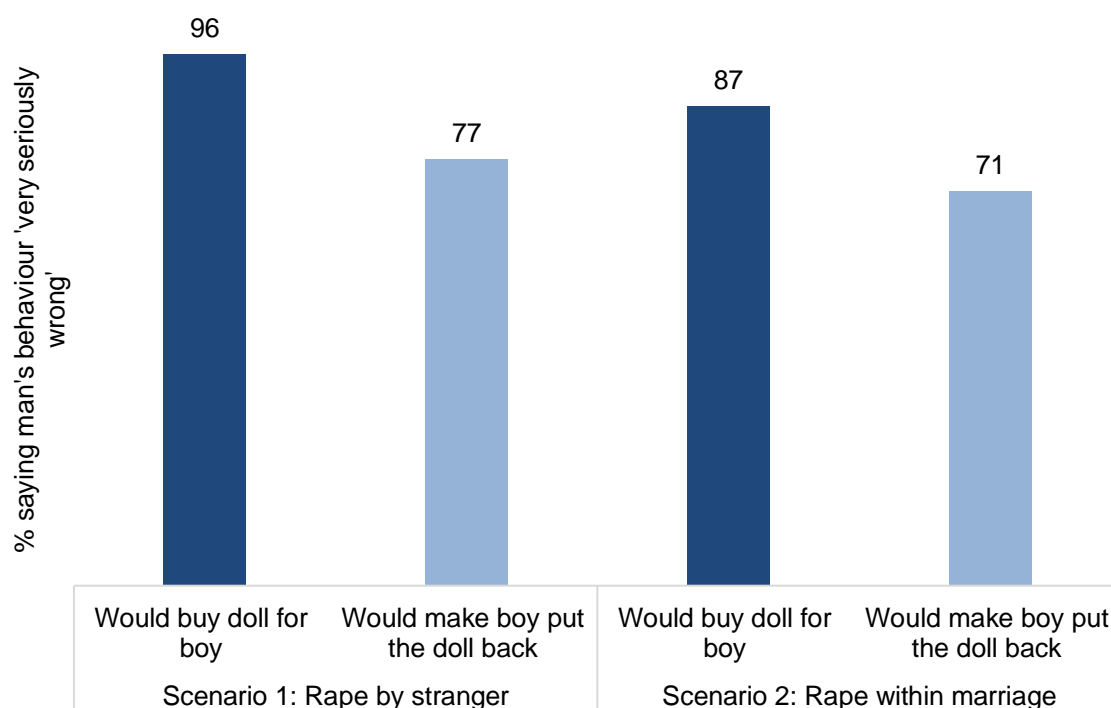
⁷ Area deprivation on SSA 2019 is measured using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020 divided into quintiles. SIMD 2020 measures the level of deprivation across Scotland – from the least deprived to the most deprived areas. It is based on 38 indicators in seven domains of: income, employment, health, education skills and training, housing, geographic access and crime. Further details are included in the separate technical report.

- Attitudes to paying for sex

For the rape within marriage scenario, those who themselves had experienced unwanted sexual contact were more likely than those who had not to think that the man’s behaviour was ‘**very seriously wrong**’ (94% compared with 83% respectively). For the rape by a stranger scenario, where the overall proportion stating this was above 90%, differences between those who had and had not experienced unwanted sexual contact were only marginally significant.

Across both scenarios, those who held more stereotypical views on gender roles, defined here as those who would refuse to buy a doll for a 3 year old boy (see [Chapter 1](#) for details), were less likely to think the man’s behaviour was ‘very seriously wrong’. As shown in Figure 2.2, among those who held stereotypical views on gender roles, 77% of those presented with the rape by a stranger scenario and 71% of those presented with the rape within marriage scenario thought the man’s behaviour was ‘very seriously wrong’. By comparison, of those who did not hold stereotypical views on gender roles, 96% of those asked about rape by a stranger and 87% of those asked about rape within marriage thought this.

Figure 2.2: Attitudes towards man raping a stranger / his wife by stereotypical views on gender roles (2019, %)



Base: All respondents who completed version B (Scenario 1) or version A (Scenario 2) of the self-completion

Among those asked about the scenario where a woman was raped by a man she had just met at a party, although the vast majority (91%) said they believed the man’s behaviour was ‘very seriously wrong’, those with higher levels of education were even more likely than those with lower levels of qualifications to do so. The proportion who thought the man’s behaviour was ‘very seriously wrong’ increased

from 81% among those with no formal qualifications to 95% among those educated to degree-level.⁸

Looking at attitudes to rape within marriage, people aged 65 and over were less likely than those aged under 65 to think the husband's behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' (74% of those aged 65 and over thought so compared with 86% of those aged 18 to 64).⁹ This may be explained, in part, by the fact that those aged 65 and over were brought up at a time when rape within marriage was not a criminal offence.

Still considering the rape within marriage scenario, people who were divorced or separated¹⁰ were more likely to view the husband's behaviour as 'very seriously wrong' (97%) than those who were currently married or living with a partner (86%) and those who had never been married (75%).

People's attitudes to rape within marriage were also related to their attitudes to paying for sex. Attitudes to paying for sex are discussed in more detail in [Chapter 6](#). In response to the question about how wrong they believed the husband's behaviour was (when presented with the scenario of rape within marriage), those who did not believe paying for sex was wrong (a score of 1-3 on the scale) were less likely to think the husband's behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' than those who believed paying for sex was wrong (a score of 5-7 on the scale): 70% and 90% respectively said the husband's behaviour was 'very seriously wrong'.

Myths about rape

In the previous section, we found that people held different views about rape when it was committed by a stranger and when it was committed within marriage, and that people were also less likely to view rape as 'very seriously wrong' if the woman first took the man to the bedroom and kissed him. The existence of a prior relationship and the woman's behaviour appeared to be viewed as mitigating circumstances when judging the seriousness and harm of rape. Further evidence on how people view rape in different circumstances was collected through asking about six myths about rape.

Respondents were presented with two statements about the extent to which a woman is to blame for being raped. Specifically, respondents were asked:

'How much, if at all, is a woman to blame if she...

...wears very revealing clothing on a night out and then gets raped?'

...is very drunk and gets raped?'

⁸ There was no equivalent relationship in the context of rape within marriage.

⁹ There was no equivalent relationship in the context of rape by a stranger.

¹⁰ Including those who have dissolved a civil partnership or are separated from a civil partnership.

Answers were given on a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 was 'not at all to blame' and 7 was 'entirely to blame'.

As shown in Table 2.3, in relation to both statements, in 2019 around 7 in 10 (69%) felt that the woman was 'not at all to blame'. This represents a notable increase from 2014. In 2014, only around 6 in 10 people (58%) thought a woman is 'not at all to blame' if she 'wears revealing clothing on a night out and then gets raped' with a similar proportion (60%) saying that a woman is 'not at all to blame' if she 'is very drunk and gets raped'. In 2019, therefore, around 3 in 10 still felt that the woman was at least partly to blame for being raped (giving a score of between 2 and 7 on the scale) if she wore revealing clothing (29%) or was very drunk (30%).

Table 2.3: Myths about rape – How much woman is to blame if she wears revealing clothing / gets drunk (2019)

	Woman wears revealing clothing and gets raped (%)		Woman is very drunk and gets raped (%)	
	2014	2019	2014	2019
7 Woman entirely to blame	4	4	5	4
6	4	2	4	2
5	7	4	5	3
4	7	5	6	6
3	6	4	6	3
2	12	9	12	11
1 Woman not at all to blame	58	69	60	69
Don't know / Refusal	2	2	2	2
Weighted base	1,433	964	1,433	964
Unweighted base	1,428	952	1,428	952

Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion

Respondents were also asked about the reporting of rape and presented with a common myth about the cause of rape. Specifically, they were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following four statements on a 5 point scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Two of these statements were repeated from the 2014 survey and two were new questions:

'Women often lie about being raped' (repeated from 2014)

'Women who say that they have been raped while they were awake and conscious, but didn't fight back, are probably lying' (new in 2019)

'Women who take a while to report that they have been raped are probably lying' (new in 2019)

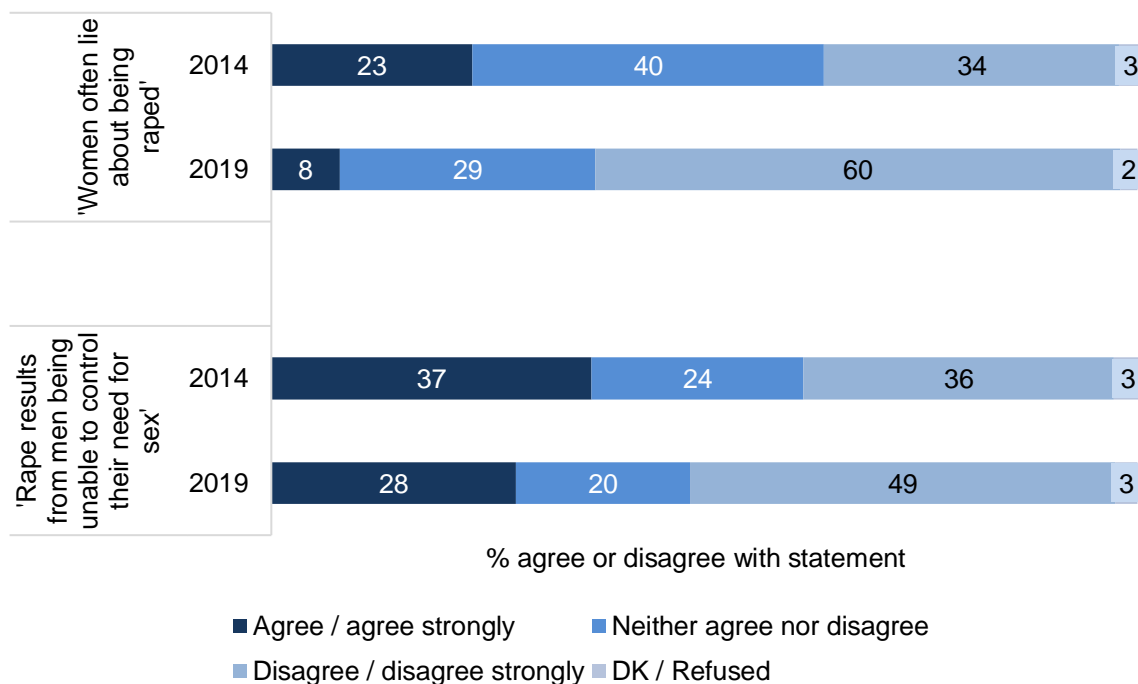
'Rape results from men being unable to control their need for sex' (repeated from 2014)

Fewer than 1 in 10 people (8%) 'agreed' or 'agreed strongly' that 'women often lie about being raped', while 6 in 10 (60%) 'disagreed' or 'disagreed strongly' with this statement. Similarly, only a small minority of people 'agreed' or 'agreed strongly' that 'women who say that they have been raped while they were awake and conscious, but didn't fight back, are probably lying' (6% compared with 77% who 'disagreed' or 'disagreed strongly') and that 'women who take a while to report that they have been raped are probably lying' (7% 'agreed' or 'agreed strongly' compared with 76% who 'disagreed' or 'disagreed strongly').

A higher proportion of people agreed that rape is caused by men being unable to control their need for sex: more than a quarter (28%) 'agreed' or 'agreed strongly' with this statement, while half (49%) 'disagreed' or 'disagreed strongly'.

Between 2014 and 2019, there were some notable changes in the extent to which people agreed or disagreed with these myths. For example, as shown in Figure 2.3, the proportion who 'agreed' or 'agreed strongly' with the statement that 'women often lie about being raped' fell by 15 percentage points, from 23% in 2014 to 8% in 2019. Meanwhile the proportion who 'agreed' or 'agreed strongly' that 'rape results from men being unable to control their need for sex' fell by 9 percentage points, from 37% to 28%.

Figure 2.3: Myths about rape – ‘Women often lie about being raped’ and ‘rape results from men being unable to control their need for sex’, 2014 and 2019 (%)



Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion

How do views on myths about rape vary between groups?

Variations in views on how much a woman was to blame (or not) for being raped when, first, wearing revealing clothing and, second, being very drunk were very similar for the subgroups considered. In response to both questions, those aged under 65 were more likely than those aged 65 and over to say the woman was ‘not at all to blame’, with around three-quarters (76%) of those aged 18 to 64 saying this about a woman wearing revealing clothing, and a similar proportion (74%) saying so about a woman who was very drunk. Among those aged 65 and over, just 47% and 48% respectively thought the woman was ‘not at all to blame’.

Those with any formal educational qualifications were also more likely than those with no formal qualifications to say the woman was ‘not at all to blame’ if she was raped: 73% of those with any formal qualifications held this view about a woman wearing revealing clothes compared with just 51% of those with no qualifications. The equivalent figures among those who thought a woman who was very drunk was ‘not at all to blame’ were 71% and 54% respectively.

Whether or not someone identified as belonging to a religion was also associated with their views on the extent to which women were to blame for being raped. Those who did not belong to any religion were more likely than those who identified with having a religion to think that the woman was ‘not at all to blame’: 78% of those with no religious identity said this about a woman wearing revealing clothes and 74% did so about a woman who was very drunk; among those with a religious

identity just 54% said this about a woman wearing revealing clothes, and 59% about a woman who was very drunk.¹¹

Some differences by income were also evident. Those in the highest income households were more likely than those in the lowest income households to view the woman as 'not at all to blame' for being raped: 77% of those in the highest income group believed a woman wearing revealing clothes was 'not all to blame' for being raped compared with 65% of those in the lowest income households. The proportions were the same for the question on whether a woman who was drunk is to blame for being raped.

Holding stereotypical views on gender roles was associated with being more likely to think the woman was at least partially to blame for being raped. In relation to the question about a woman wearing revealing clothes, 79% of those who did not hold stereotypical views on gender roles thought the woman was 'not at all to blame' for being raped, compared with only 50% of those who did hold stereotypical views on gender roles. In relation to the question about a woman who was very drunk and was then raped, the equivalent figures were 75% and 53% respectively.

Having experienced unwanted sexual contact themselves was also associated with the extent to which someone thought a woman was (or was not) to blame for being raped. Those who had experienced unwanted sexual contact were more likely than those who had not to say the woman was 'not at all to blame' if she was wearing revealing clothing (81% compared with 69% of those who had not had such an experience).

Finally, women were more likely than men to say that a woman wearing revealing clothing was 'not at all to blame' (75% of women held this view compared with 64% of men). There was no equivalent significant difference in relation to the question about a woman who was very drunk.

Across the three statements about women lying about being raped ('women often lie about being raped', 'women who say that they have been raped while they were awake and conscious, but didn't fight back, are probably lying', 'women who take a while to report that they have been raped are probably lying') and the statement that men's need for sex is a cause of rape ('rape results from men being unable to control their need for sex') a number of characteristics were consistently associated with higher levels of disagreement.¹² This suggests that some groups of people were less likely than others to believe these myths about rape.

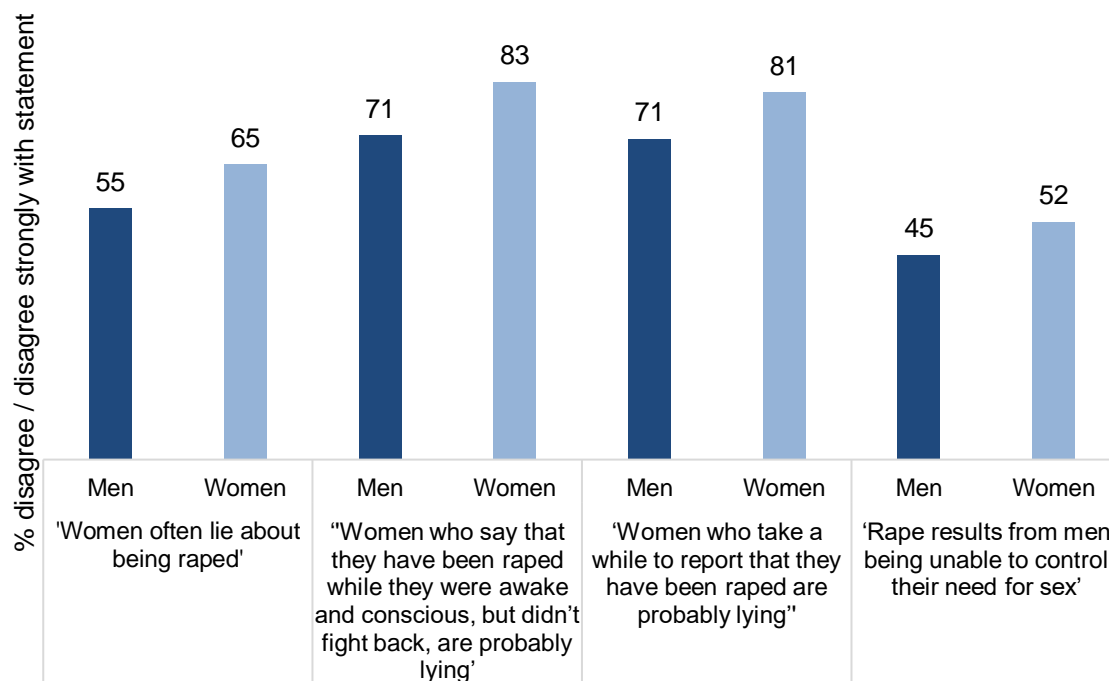
First, women tended to be more likely than men to disagree with all four statements. For example, 65% of women disagreed that 'women often lie about being raped' compared with 55% of men (see Figure 2.4). Second, younger people

¹¹ As people who identify with a religion and those with no formal qualifications are more likely to be older, it is not clear which of these three factors is driving these differences in attitudes.

¹² Overall levels of agreement with the statements were low. Therefore, few statistically significant differences were found between subgroups in levels of agreement.

were more likely to disagree with these statements than older people – in particular, those aged under 65 were more likely to do so than those aged 65 and over. For example, 64% of those aged 18 to 64 disagreed that ‘women often lie about being raped’, while just 47% of people aged 65 and over did so.

Figure 2.4: Myths about rape – % disagreeing with statement by gender (2019)



Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion

There were also differences by level of education and by income. In particular, those with formal qualifications were more likely than those with no formal qualifications to say they disagreed. For example, 80% of those with formal qualifications disagreed that ‘women who take a while to report that they have been raped are probably lying’, while just 53% of those with no formal qualifications disagreed. Those in the highest income group were also more likely than those on lower incomes to disagree with the statements. In response to the statement that ‘rape results from men being unable to control their need for sex’, for instance, 62% of people in the highest income group disagreed, while just 39% of those in the lowest income group disagreed.¹³

Levels of disagreement with the statements also varied according to whether people held stereotypical views on gender roles, with those who did not hold stereotypical views more likely to disagree with the statements. For example, 83% of those who did not hold stereotypical views on gender roles disagreed that ‘women who take a while to report that they have been raped are probably lying’, compared with 57% of those who did hold stereotypical views on gender roles.

¹³ As people with no formal qualifications and those on lower household incomes are more likely to be older, it is not clear which of these three factors is driving these differences in attitudes.

Finally, those who had experienced unwanted sexual contact themselves were more likely than those who had not to disagree with the three statements about lying: 'women often lie about being raped', 'women who take a while to report that they have been raped are probably lying' and 'women who say that they have been raped while they were awake and conscious, but didn't fight back, are probably lying'. Among those who had experienced unwanted sexual contact, 72% disagreed with the first of these three statements, 91% the second and 93% disagreed with the last, while the equivalent figures among those who had not experienced unwanted sexual contact were 60%, 75% and 77%, respectively.

Chapter 3 – Domestic abuse: Verbal and physical abuse

This is the first of two chapters looking at people's attitudes to domestic abuse. This chapter considers views on physical and verbal abuse within a relationship, while attitudes towards controlling behaviour are explored in the chapter that follows.

There is no single agreed definition of domestic abuse. Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) define domestic abuse as:

'Any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, cohabiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse can be committed in the home or elsewhere including online.' (Police Scotland and COPFS, 2019)

While some definitions of domestic abuse may have less of an emphasis on 'criminal conduct', the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 makes it clear that domestic abuse is a crime. The Act states that abusive behaviour can be behaviour that is violent, threatening or intimidating. It can also include behaviour that has the purpose or effect of making the recipient subordinate or dependent on the perpetrator, isolating them, controlling or monitoring their activities, depriving or restricting their freedom of action or humiliating/degrading them.

The joint protocol between Police Scotland and the COPFS acknowledges that domestic abuse is a form of gender-based violence, predominantly committed by men against women, but not always. It can also include abuse of male victims by female partners, or abuse of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals within a relationship.

Attitudes to verbal domestic abuse

The first scenario covers attitudes to someone who repeatedly verbally abuses their spouse. Half of respondents were asked their views when the woman was the victim of the verbal abuse from her husband, and half when a man was the victim and his wife was the perpetrator. Asking about both a female victim and a male victim allowed responses to be compared to determine whether people were consistent in their attitudes to verbal domestic abuse, or whether attitudes were dependent on the gender of the victim and/or the perpetrator. People were asked what they thought of the perpetrator's behaviour, on a 7-point wrong scale from 1 (not wrong at all) to 7 (very seriously wrong). The exact wording of the scenario was:

'Imagine a married couple who both work. When the man/woman has a stressful day at work, he/she often takes it out on his wife/her husband by putting her/him down and criticising her/him.'

Table 3.1 shows that most people believed that often putting down a partner and criticising them is **wrong**, irrespective of the gender of the perpetrator or the victim: 94% thought that a man often putting down and criticising his wife, after he had had a stressful day at work, is wrong (with a score of at least 5 out of 7 on the scale), and when the repeated abuse was from a woman towards her husband 91% viewed it as wrong. There was, however, a clear difference in the strength of feeling towards the behaviour depending on whether the victim was a woman or a man. While just over 7 in 10 (72%) thought the behaviour of the man putting down his wife was ‘very seriously wrong’, around half (51%) said the same when asked about a woman putting down her husband.

Views on how wrong it is for someone to put down a partner and criticise them did not significantly shift between 2014 and 2019, irrespective of the gender of the victim or the perpetrator.¹⁴

Table 3.1: Attitudes towards the perpetrator’s behaviour – often putting down and criticising wife/husband

	Man putting down his wife (%)		Woman putting down her husband (%)	
	2014	2019	2014	2019
7 Very seriously wrong	72	72	46	51
6	16	17	27	28
5	6	6	15	12
4	2	2	6	5
3	1	*	2	2
2	*	1	1	1
1 Not wrong at all	*	1	2	1
Don’t know / Refusal	2	2	*	1
Weighted base	738	460	695	505
Unweighted base	740	455	688	497

Base: All respondents who completed either version A (man putting down his wife) or version B (woman putting down her husband) of the self-completion questionnaire

‘*’ indicates less than 0.5 percent but greater than zero

¹⁴ The apparent change between 2014 and 2019 in the proportion reporting the woman’s behaviour is ‘very seriously wrong’ when she often puts down her husband was not statistically significant.

When asked to consider how much **harm** the perpetrator’s behaviour causes the victim of the verbal abuse, a similar pattern was observed. Table 3.2 shows that, while overall most people thought someone putting down and criticising a partner caused either ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of harm to the victim, irrespective of their gender, a higher proportion believed this to be the case when the woman is the victim (91% compared with 85% who thought that a woman often putting down her husband did ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of harm to him). This difference in views depending on the gender of the victim was particularly pronounced when looking solely at those who believed the verbally abusive behaviour caused ‘a great deal’ of harm. When asked about the harm caused to a woman, 66% said it did ‘a great deal’ of harm compared with only 44% who thought that it did ‘a great deal’ of harm to a man.

Views on how harmful the repeated criticism from her husband is to a woman did not change significantly between 2014 and 2019. Although there was a significant increase in the proportion of people who believed harm is caused to a man when he is regularly put down and criticised by his wife (in 2014, 79% said it caused the man either ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of harm, compared with 85% in 2019), it remains the case that harm is perceived to be greater for female victims.

Table 3.2: After a stressful day at work, a man/woman often puts down and criticises his wife/her husband – Belief about the level of harm done to victim

	Man putting down his wife (%)		Woman putting down her husband (%)	
	2014	2019	2014	2019
A great deal	61	66	41	44
Quite a lot	31	25	38	41
Some	6	4	17	11
Not very much	*	1	3	1
None at all	*	1	1	2
Don’t know / Refusal	2	2	*	1
Weighted base	738	460	695	505
Unweighted base	740	455	688	497

Base: All respondents who completed either version A (man putting down his wife) or version B (woman putting down her husband) of the self-completion questionnaire

‘*’ indicates less than 0.5 percent but greater than zero

How do attitudes to verbal domestic abuse vary between groups?

This section examines how attitudes to someone often putting down and criticising their spouse varied by the following respondent characteristics:

- Gender
- Age
- Education
- Income¹⁵
- Area deprivation¹⁶
- Religious identity
- Marital status
- Whether they have ever been regularly verbally abused, put down or criticised by a partner
- Whether they held stereotypical views on gender roles

Views on how **wrong** it is for a man to put down his wife and criticise her after he's had a stressful day at work did not vary greatly between different groups. For example, men were no more likely than women to view the man's behaviour towards his wife as 'very seriously wrong' (73% and 71% respectively). The only significant difference in views on a male perpetrator's behaviour was between age groups. Those aged under 65 were significantly more likely than those aged 65 and over to view the husband's behaviour as 'very seriously wrong' (74% for those aged 18 to 64 compared with 62% aged 65 and over).

More differences in views were apparent when the perpetrator of the verbal abuse is a woman and the victim is her husband. As Figure 3.1 shows, women were more likely than men to think that a woman often putting down her husband and criticising him was 'very seriously wrong' (58% of women compared with 43% of men).

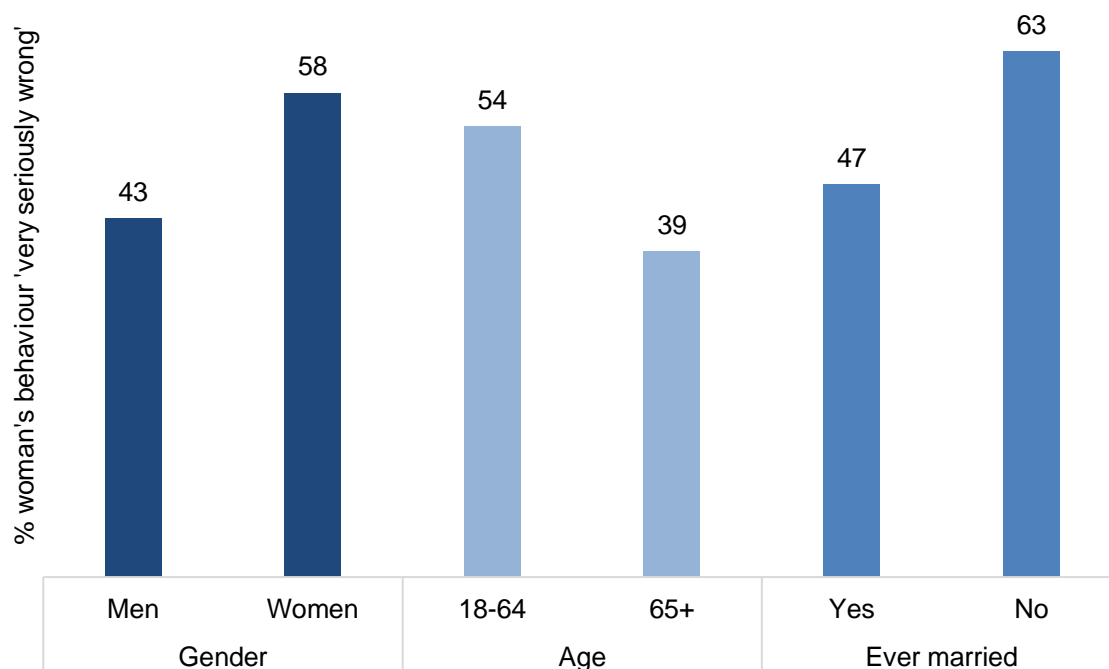
Also, in line with the pattern by age observed above for a male perpetrator's behaviour, older people were also less likely than others to view a woman's verbally abusive behaviour to her husband as wrong (39% of those aged 65 and over viewed the behaviour as 'very seriously wrong' compared with 54% of those aged 18 to 64).

Those who had never been married or in a civil partnership were more likely than those who were currently married or had previously been married to say that the behaviour of the woman who often puts her husband down and criticises him is 'very seriously wrong' (63% compared with 47% respectively).

¹⁵ There were no significant differences by income on attitudes to verbal domestic abuse or physical domestic abuse discussed later in this chapter.

¹⁶ There were no significant differences by area deprivation on attitudes to verbal domestic abuse or physical domestic abuse discussed later in this chapter.

Figure 3.1: Belief that it is ‘very seriously wrong’ that a woman often puts down and criticises her husband, by gender, age and marital status (2019, %)



Base: All respondents who completed version B of the self-completion questionnaire

Views on how **harmful** verbal abuse is to the victim also differed between groups of people. Where the victim of the repeated criticism is a woman, age was again related to differing views. In addition to being more likely than those aged 65 and over to think the male perpetrator’s behaviour is wrong, those aged 18 to 64 were also more likely than older people to view the abuse as causing ‘a great deal’ of harm to the woman. Around 7 in 10 (69%) of those aged 18 to 64 believed that ‘a great deal’ of harm is done to the woman, while just over half (53%) of those aged 65 and over thought the same. Those who did not identify as belonging to any religion were more likely than those who did to feel that the man’s behaviour is likely to do ‘a great deal’ of harm to his wife (71% and 58% respectively).¹⁷

In addition, those who held stereotypical attitudes on gender roles were also less likely than those who do not to believe that ‘a great deal’ of harm is caused to his wife by verbal abuse (55% compared with 72% respectively).¹⁸

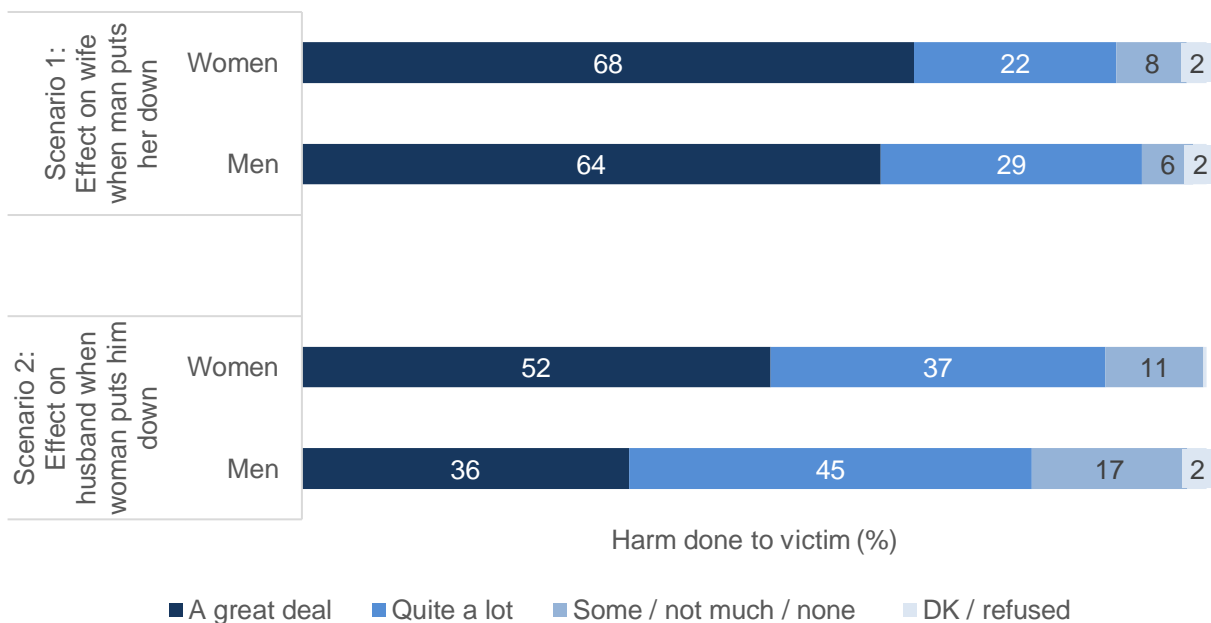
Figure 3.2 shows that although there was no significant difference between the views of men and women on the level of harm verbal abuse causes a woman (64% of men viewed the husband’s behaviour as causing the woman ‘a great deal’ of harm compared with 68% of women), views on the level of harm done to a man

¹⁷ As people who identify with a religion are more likely to be older, it is not clear which of these two factors is driving these differences in attitudes.

¹⁸ Education was also significantly associated with the perceived level of harm verbal abuse causes a woman but there was no clear pattern.

when his wife puts him down and criticises him did vary by gender. Just as men were less likely than women to view a woman putting down her husband as wrong, they were also less likely than women to view the behaviour as causing harm to male victims, suggesting that men take a less serious view of verbally abusive behaviour towards men than towards women. Over a third (36%) of men felt that ‘a great deal’ of harm is done to a man when his wife puts him down, while around half (52%) of women felt the same. Around 1 in 6 (17%) men thought that some, not much or no harm at all is done to a man when he is put down by his wife, whereas only 6% of men thought the same about the level of harm done to a woman when she is put down by her husband. For women, views were similar for both the scenario where the wife or the husband were the victims (8% when the woman was the victim and 11% when it was the man).

Figure 3.2: Belief regarding amount of harm done to a woman / man when her husband / his wife often puts him down and criticises her / him, by gender (2019, %)



Base: All respondents who completed version A (scenario 1) or version B (scenario 2) of the self-completion

In addition to gender, there were some other differences between subgroups in attitudes to the level of **harm** done to male victims of verbal abuse. Similar to views when the victim is a woman, older people were less likely than those aged under 65 to think that ‘a great deal’ of harm is done to male victims (30% of those aged 65 and over compared with 48% of those aged 18 to 64). Those who themselves had ever been regularly subjected to verbal abuse, put downs or criticism by a partner were more likely to state that the man who experienced this type of behaviour was caused ‘a great deal’ of harm (61% who had experienced verbal abuse, compared with 41% who had not).

The change, between 2014 and 2019, in the proportion who thought that either ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of harm is done to a man when he is regularly put down and criticised by his wife appears to be entirely driven by changes in views of women. In both 2014 and 2019, four-fifths of men (80% in 2014 and 81% in 2019) thought that ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of harm is done to a man. Over this same period, the proportion of women who thought that verbal abuse caused the husband ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of harm increased by 10 percentage points from 79% to 89%.

Attitudes to physical domestic abuse

After respondents were asked about how wrong and harmful they thought it was for someone to regularly put down and criticise their spouse, they were presented with a scenario for the same couple where the verbal abuse escalates to physical abuse.

Half of respondents were asked what they thought about physical abuse perpetrated by a man (on his wife), and half were asked about the same scenario but with the abuse perpetrated by a woman (on her husband). Again, a scale of 1 (not wrong at all) to 7 (very seriously wrong) was used to describe the perpetrator’s behaviour. Exact wording for the scenario was:

‘Thinking about the same couple where the man/woman sometimes puts down his wife/her husband and criticises her/him. Imagine that one day he/she also gets angry and ends up slapping her/him in the face.’

Respondents were also asked about the amount of harm they believed the action did to the victim with possible answer options ranging from ‘a great deal’ to ‘none at all’. Since the scenarios and questions associated with them were also included in SSA 2014, it is possible to explore whether attitudes have changed over time.

As discussed above, most people recognised the seriousness of verbal abuse and the level of harm it causes the victim. Views towards physical domestic abuse were even more pronounced, however. Table 3.3 shows that more than 9 in 10 (93%) people viewed the behaviour of a man slapping his wife as ‘**very seriously wrong**’,

while the proportion viewing the behaviour of a woman slapping her husband as ‘very seriously wrong’ was lower, at around 8 in 10 (81%). The proportions viewing this escalation to physical abuse as ‘very seriously wrong’ were much higher than the 72% who viewed verbal abuse against a women, and the 51% who viewed verbal abuse against a man, as ‘very seriously wrong’. Attitudes to this type of physically abusive behaviour within a partnership have not changed significantly since 2014, irrespective of the gender of the victim or the perpetrator.

Table 3.3: Slapping wife / husband – Attitudes towards the perpetrator’s behaviour

	Man slapping his wife (%)		Woman slapping her husband (%)	
	2014 [^]	2019 [^]	2014	2019
7 Very seriously wrong	92	93	81	81
6	5	4	11	12
5	1	1	3	2
4	1	*	2	2
3	-	-	1	1
2	*	-	*	-
1 Not wrong at all	1	1	1	1
Don’t know / Refusal	2	2	*	1
Weighted base	738	460	695	505
Unweighted base	740	455	688	497

Base: All respondents who completed either version A (man slapping his wife) or version B (woman slapping her husband) of the self-completion

‘*’ indicates less than 0.5 percent but greater than zero

[^] Figures do not add to 100% due to rounding.

There was also a widespread view that, as well as being ‘very seriously wrong’, getting angry and slapping a partner causes the victim ‘a great deal’ of **harm**. Nine out of ten (90%) people thought that a woman being slapped by her husband causes her ‘a great deal’ of harm. As seen with the views on the perceived wrongness of the physically abusive behaviour, a smaller proportion (71%), but still a majority, thought that the same level of harm is done to a man who is slapped by his wife.

Table 3.4 shows that, while there remained a significant gap in views on the harm slapping causes to the victim depending on the victim’s gender, the size of that gap narrowed between 2014 and 2019. This reduction was driven by a significant

increase in the proportion of people who believed ‘a great deal’ of harm is done to a man when slapped by his wife (from 62% in 2014 to 71% in 2019), whereas the equivalent figures for those believing ‘a great deal’ of harm is done to a woman when slapped by her husband remained the same (89% in 2014 and 90% in 2019).

Table 3.4: Slapping wife / husband – Belief about the level of harm done to victim

	Man slapping his wife (%)		Woman slapping her husband (%)	
	2014	2019	2014	2019
A great deal	89	90	62	71
Quite a lot	8	6	28	21
Some	1	1	7	5
Not very much	*	*	1	1
None at all	*	1	1	*
Don't know / Refusal	2	2	1	1
Weighted base	738	460	695	505
Unweighted base	740	455	688	497

Base: All respondents who completed either version A (man slapping his wife) or version B (woman slapping her husband) of the self-completion

‘*’ indicates less than 0.5 percent but greater than zero

How do attitudes to physical domestic abuse vary between groups?

This section considers how views on physical domestic abuse vary between subgroups. Attitudes were considered in relation to the same set of characteristics as used for the earlier scenarios, with the exception that personal experience of physical abuse was used instead of personal experience of verbal abuse. Since the majority viewed someone slapping their partner as ‘very seriously wrong’ and that it does ‘a great deal’ of harm to the victim, irrespective of the victim’s gender, we would not expect to see much variation in views between different groups of people.

In fact, education was the only factor significantly associated with perceived **wrongness** of a man slapping his wife. People with no formal educational qualifications were less likely than those with any formal qualifications to view the behaviour of a man slapping his wife as ‘very seriously wrong’ (83% compared with 94% respectively).

The gender of the victim and the perpetrator of physical domestic abuse does not appear to affect the views of women, whereas men appear to view the behaviour differently depending on the gender of the victim and the perpetrator. While 94% of men thought it was 'very seriously wrong' for a man to slap his wife (compared with 91% of women), the equivalent figures for a woman slapping her husband were 74% of men and 88% of women. This reinforces the point made previously, in relation to verbal domestic abuse, that some men appear to be of the view that it is more acceptable for a man than a woman to be a victim of abusive behaviour. Gender was the only factor significantly associated with views on a man slapping his wife.

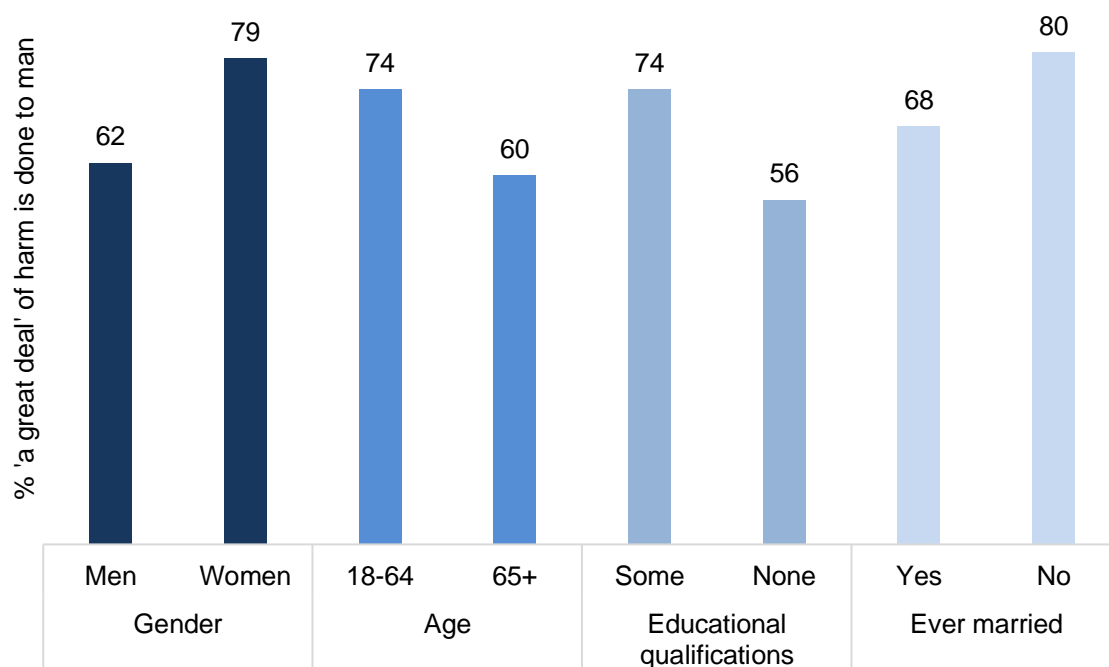
The earlier finding that views on the perceived wrongness of a man slapping his wife were associated with education holds true when exploring views on the perceived **harm** physical abuse causes the wife. In addition to being less likely than others to view the behaviour as 'very seriously wrong,' those with no formal educational qualifications were also less likely than others to say that slapping the woman causes her 'a great deal' of harm (80% and 91% respectively).

Stereotypical views on gender roles were also associated with the perceived degree of harm done to the woman: 94% of those who did not hold stereotypical views on gender roles thought that a man slapping his wife does 'a great deal' of harm to her, compared with 83% of those who did hold stereotypical views on gender roles.

Just as women were more likely than men to view the behaviour of a woman slapping her husband as 'very seriously wrong,' so too were they more likely than men to believe that the behaviour is harmful to the man. Figure 3.3 shows that 79% of women compared with 62% of men thought that 'a great deal' of harm is done to the man. Those aged 18 to 64 were more likely than older people to believe that a wife slapping her husband causes him 'a great deal' of harm (74% compared with 60% of those aged 65 and over). People with formal educational qualifications were also more likely than those with none to view the behaviour as harmful to the man (74% and 56% respectively thought it caused 'a great deal' of harm).¹⁹ It was also the case that 80% of those who had never been married or in a civil partnership believed 'a great deal' of harm is caused to the man slapped by his wife, compared with 68% of those who were currently married, living with a partner or had previously been married.

¹⁹ As people with no formal qualifications are more likely to be older, it is not clear which of these two factors is driving these differences in attitudes.

Figure 3.3: Belief that a great deal of harm is done to a man when his wife slaps him by gender, age, education and marital status (2019, %)



Base: All respondents who completed version B of the self-completion

Stereotypical views on gender roles were also associated with views on the level of harm physical domestic abuse does to a male victim, as they were for views on the level of harm verbal abuse causes a male victim. Three-quarters (75%) of those who said they would buy a truck for the girl without saying anything²⁰ believed that ‘a great deal’ of harm is done to the man slapped by his wife, compared with 62% of those who were more reluctant to buy it.²¹

We noted earlier that the proportion of adults believing ‘a great deal’ of harm is done to the man in this example of physical domestic abuse had increased significantly since 2014. As with the scenario about the harm caused by a woman putting her husband down, the increase was largely due to a change in women’s views over the period, rather than a change in men’s views. In 2014, 57% of men felt that ‘a great deal’ of harm is done to a man when he is slapped by his wife, with the increase to 62% in 2019 not being significant. A much larger, and statistically significant, increase was observed in the proportion of women who felt that ‘a great deal’ of harm is done to a man when he is slapped by his wife, from 67% in 2014 to 79% in 2019. Differences in the perceived level of harm done to a man when he is slapped by his wife by age, gender, education and marital status have all widened

²⁰ The differences between the views of those who would buy a princess doll for the boy without saying anything and those who would not buy the boy a princess doll were not statistically significant.

²¹ ‘Those who were more reluctant to buy it’ represents a combination of those who said they would ‘make her put the truck back and pick a toy more common for girls’ and those who said they would buy it but ‘first try to get her to pick a toy that’s more common for girls’.

since 2014, with greater increases for those aged under 65 (from 64% in 2014 to 74% in 2019) than for those aged 65 and over (56% in 2014 and 60% in 2019); for those with formal qualifications (64% in 2014 and 74% in 2019) than for those with no formal qualifications (52% in 2014 and 56% in 2019); and for those who do not live with a partner and have never been married (64% in 2014 and 80% in 2019) than for those who have been married or who currently live with a partner (61% in 2014 and 68% in 2019).

Chapter 4 – Domestic abuse: Controlling behaviour

Controlling behaviour within a relationship is often referred to as coercive control. In February 2018, the Scottish Parliament passed the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act to create a specific offence of domestic abuse which covers not only physical abuse but other forms of psychological harm and coercive and controlling behaviour (Scottish Parliament, 2018). This act came into force in early 2019. The legislation draws on the lived experience of survivors of domestic abuse and recognises that coercive control can cause as much harm as physical abuse.

This chapter explores attitudes towards controlling behaviour within a relationship using three distinct scenarios and comparing perceptions of the extent to which this behaviour is thought to be wrong in all three. Some respondents' views were sought when the man was the perpetrator and the woman was the victim, and the views of other respondents were sought about their attitudes when the woman was the perpetrator and the man was the victim. As with the previous chapter, comparing these two sets of attitudes enables us to establish whether people adopt a consistent attitude towards a particular form of abuse, or whether their views are dependent on the gender of the victim. Finally, we consider whether the victim of the controlling behaviour having had an affair makes any difference to perceptions of how wrong this behaviour is perceived to be. Two of these scenarios were also included in SSA in 2014, so we are able to explore whether attitudes have changed over time.

It is important to note that coercive control is best understood as a course of conduct, which has a cumulative impact and often involves many different kinds of behaviours and strategies being layered on top on one another. While our set of scenarios on persistent text messaging is intended to enable an exploration of differences in perceptions between isolated occurrences and more established patterns of behaviour, this survey nevertheless does not explore attitudes towards coercive control involving a range of different behaviours together.

The first example of controlling behaviour explores excessive monitoring. Half of the respondents were asked their views when the person experiencing this behaviour was a woman and half when the person experiencing this behaviour was a man. The first scenario was about someone who texts his or her spouse every time she or he goes out for an evening meal:

'Imagine a married woman/man is going out with her/his friends for a meal in the evening. Every time she/he goes out she/he tells her husband/his wife where she/he is going and when she'll/he'll be back. Even so, he/she always sends her/him a text asking her/him where she/he is and what time she'll/he'll get home.'

As an escalation to this scenario, respondents were then asked their views on someone texting his or her spouse **multiple** times when she or he is out with friends:

‘Now imagine every time she/he goes out with her/his friends he/she sends her/him **a number of texts** throughout the evening asking her/him where she/he is and when she’s/he’s going to get home.’

For each of these examples, respondents were asked how wrong they felt this behaviour (the texting) was, on a scale from 1 (not wrong at all) to 7 (very seriously wrong).

The next scenario explores a husband trying to control what his wife wears. All respondents were given the following scenario and asked how wrong they felt the husband’s behaviour is:

‘A woman is getting ready for a night out. When her husband sees she is dressed up more than usual, he tells her he doesn’t like her going out looking like that and tells her to change.’

To investigate the possibility that people’s views on this type of controlling behaviour might depend on the circumstances, the subsequent scenario asked respondents how wrong they felt the man’s behaviour would be if he ‘had recently found out that his wife had been having an affair’.

The final example of controlling behaviour explores financial control. This scenario describes a husband who insists on looking at his wife’s bank statements every month. Again, respondents were asked how wrong they felt this behaviour to be.

‘Imagine a married couple who both work full time and earn similar salaries. The man insists on looking at his wife’s bank statements every month, but he does not let her see his own.’

Attitudes to controlling behaviour

The extent to which controlling behaviour was perceived as **wrong** varied between the scenarios of excessive monitoring, trying to control what someone wears and financial control (see Table 4.1). People were most likely to think that the financial controlling behaviour was ‘very seriously wrong’. Two-thirds (68%) felt that a husband insisting on looking at his wife’s bank statements without showing her his bank statements was ‘very seriously wrong’, and over 9 in 10 (93%) gave this behaviour a score of 5 or more on the 7-point scale. Over half (55%) felt that a man controlling what his wife wears was ‘very seriously wrong’, with around 9 in 10 (89%) giving this behaviour a score of 5 or more.

The behaviour that was seen as the least seriously wrong was that of excessive monitoring, where a man sends one text to ask his wife where she is and when she will be home. Only one-fifth (20%) said that they thought this behaviour was ‘very seriously wrong’, while nearly three-fifths (58%) thought that this behaviour merited

a score of 5 or more. When respondents were then asked about a husband who texts his wife **multiple times** throughout the evening, the proportion who thought that this behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' increased to over two-fifths (42%), and the proportion who gave a score of 5 or more increased to over four-fifths (83%).

Table 4.1: Views on controlling behaviour (2019)

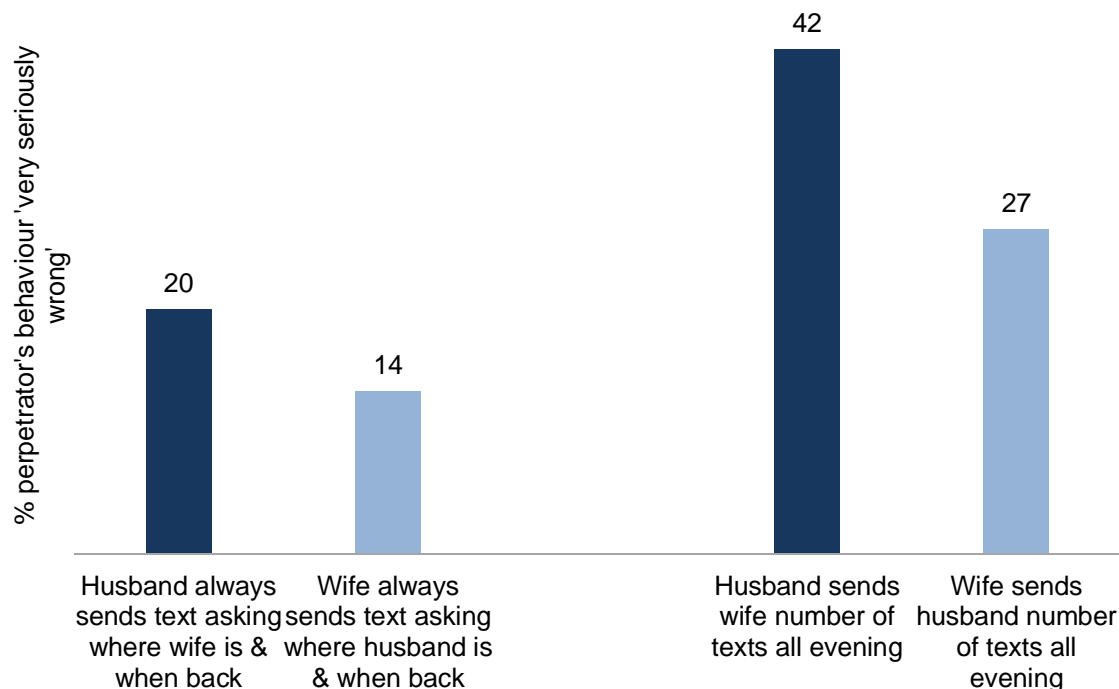
	Husband always sends text asking where wife is & when back (%)	Husband sends wife no. of texts all evening (%)	Husband tells wife to change outfit before she goes out (%)	Husband looks at wife's bank statements but doesn't let her see his (%)
7 Very seriously wrong	20	42	55	68
6	18	30	23	19
5	20	11	11	6
4	18	8	5	3
3	9	3	3	1
2	6	3	1	1
1 Not wrong at all	7	1	1	1
Don't know / Refusal	2	2	1	1
Weighted bases	460	460	964	964
Unweighted bases	455	455	952	952

Base = All respondents (first two scenarios); all respondents who completed version A of the self-completion (last two scenarios)

Respondents were also asked how wrong they thought the behaviour was if a woman sends her husband a text when he goes out 'asking him where he is and what time he'll get home', and how wrong the behaviour was if she sends him 'a **number of texts** throughout the evening asking him where he is and when he's going to get home'. Figure 4.1 shows that, for both scenarios, excessive monitoring was thought to be more seriously wrong when the perpetrator was a man compared with when the perpetrator was a woman. As discussed above, when the husband sends his wife one text to ask 'where she is and what time she'll get home', 20% felt this behaviour was 'very seriously wrong'; this compares with 14% when the perpetrator was a woman and the victim was a man. When the scenario was extended to 'a number of texts' being sent throughout the evening, 42% felt this behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' when the perpetrator was a man and the

victim was a woman, compared with 27% when the perpetrator was a woman and the victim was a man.

Figure 4.1: Belief that excessive control is ‘very seriously wrong’ by gender of the perpetrator (2019, %)



Base = All respondents who completed either version A (man texts wife) or version B (woman texts husband) of the self-completion

The scenarios on a man controlling what his wife wears and financial control were also asked on SSA 2014, allowing changes in attitudes over time to be explored. There was a significant increase in the proportion of those who thought that it was ‘very seriously wrong’ for a husband to control what his wife wears, from 39% in 2014 to 55% in 2019. However, there was no significant difference between the proportion who thought that financial control was ‘very seriously wrong’ in 2014 and 2019. The questions regarding excessive monitoring were introduced in 2019 and therefore comparisons over time cannot be made for this scenario.

How do views on controlling behaviour vary between groups?

The extent to which controlling behaviour was perceived as ‘**very seriously wrong**’ varied between different subgroups. The extent to which financial control was perceived to be ‘very seriously wrong’ only differed by gender, with women (71%) significantly more likely than men (64%)²² to believe this behaviour was ‘very seriously wrong’. In relation to the scenario where a man controls what his wife wears, the views of those who thought it was ‘very seriously wrong’ differed significantly by gender, income, and whether people held stereotypical views on gender roles. Women (62%) were significantly more likely than men (46%) to think

²² This difference is marginally significant: $p=0.069$

this behaviour was 'very seriously wrong', as were those in the highest income group (61%) compared with those in the lowest income group (49%).²³ Those who held stereotypical views on gender roles were less likely than those who did not hold stereotypical views on gender roles to think this behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' (44% compared with 59% respectively).

There were no significant differences by subgroup in views on the excessive monitoring scenario, where a man texts his wife once to ask where she is. However, the proportion of people who thought that it was 'very seriously wrong' when a man texts his wife **multiple times** throughout the evening varied significantly by age. The youngest age group were less likely to consider this behaviour to be 'very seriously wrong' than all other age groups: around a quarter (27%) of those aged 18 to 34 thought a man texting his wife multiple times throughout the evening was 'very seriously wrong', compared with half (50%) of those aged 65 and over. This may be at least partly explained by the higher level of general use of mobile devices and messaging among the younger age group compared with older age groups.

Controlling behaviour after partner has had an affair

This section covers views on the scenario about a man controlling what his wife wears after he finds out she is having an affair, to explore whether the affair makes a difference to people's views. Overall, a husband telling his wife to change what she is wearing when she is going out was seen as less seriously wrong when the woman had had an affair. Without the information that the woman had had an affair, over half (55%) thought that a husband trying to control what his wife wears was '**very seriously wrong**'. This declines to 3 in 10 (30%) who thought that it was 'very seriously wrong' for a man to tell his wife to change her outfit if he has recently found out that she is having an affair.

The extent to which people felt that it was 'very seriously wrong' for a man to try to control what his wife wears after finding out she has had an affair differed significantly by whether people had experienced a relationship where their partner tried to control what they did. People who had experienced this type of controlling relationship were more likely to feel that the man's behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' (41%) than those who had not (28%). In addition, around a third (34%) of women thought that his behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' compared with a quarter (25%) of men. However, this difference by gender was also seen in the scenario before respondents were told that the wife had had an affair, where 62% of women and 46% of men thought his behaviour was 'very seriously wrong'.

A change in attitudes to a husband trying to control what his wife wears after she has had an affair was observed between 2014 and 2019. The proportion of those who thought that this behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' increased from 21% in 2014 to 30% in 2019. A larger increase in the proportion of those who felt that this behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' was observed among those who had

²³ This difference is marginally significant: $p=0.070$

experience of being in a relationship where their partner tried to control what they did (a 17-percentage-point increase, from 24% in 2014 to 41% in 2019) than among those who had not experienced being in a relationship where their partner tried to control what they did (an 8-percentage-point increase, from 20% in 2014 to 28% in 2019).

Perceptions of harm of controlling behaviour

In addition to being asked how wrong people felt the controlling behaviour to be, for the scenarios on excessive monitoring and financial control, respondents were asked what **harm**, if any, they felt the husband's behaviour did to his wife, on a scale from 'a great deal' to 'none at all'. Table 4.2 shows that, in both cases, the majority thought these behaviours caused 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of harm. Around three-quarters (77%) thought that a husband insisting on looking at his wife's bank statements without letting her see his own caused 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of harm, while 68% thought that it caused 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of harm for a husband to text his wife multiple times throughout the evening to ask where she is and when she will be home. In comparison, less than half (46%) thought that a wife texting her husband multiple times throughout the evening caused 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of harm.

Table 4.2: Views on harm done by controlling behaviour (2019)

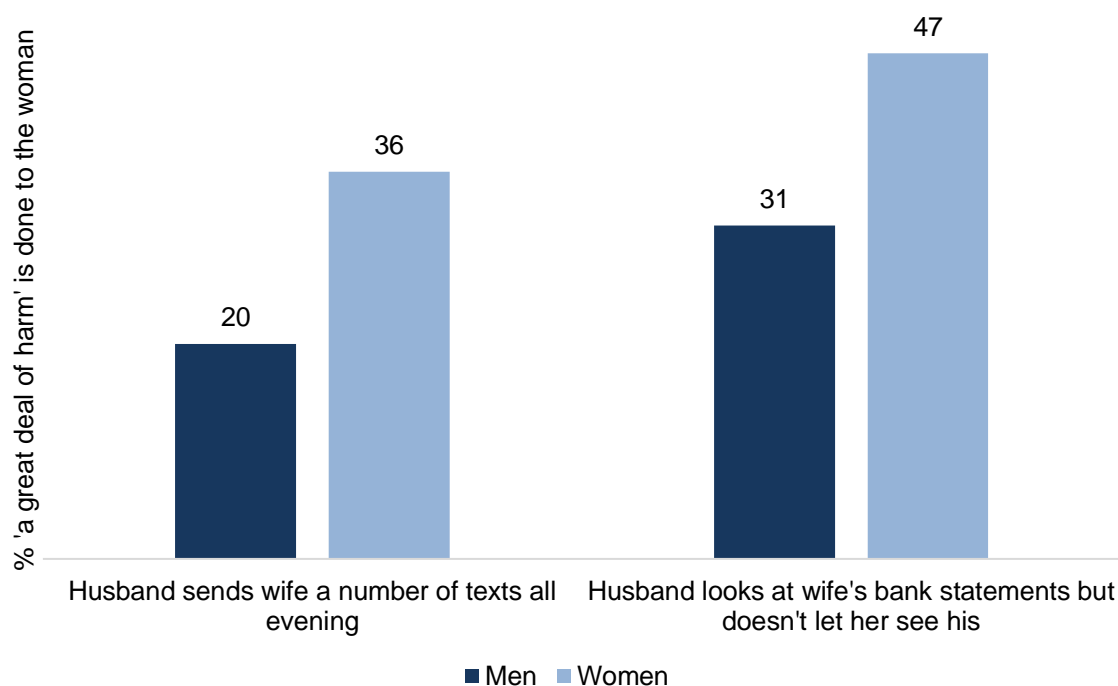
	Husband sends wife a number of texts all evening (%)	Wife sends husband a number of texts all evening (%)	Husband looks at wife's bank statements but doesn't let her see his (%)
A great deal	28	13	39
Quite a lot	40	32	38
Some	20	33	16
Not very much	6	13	4
None at all	3	6	1
Don't know / Refusal	2	2	2
Weighted bases	460	505	964
Unweighted bases	455	497	952

Base = All respondents who completed version A (man texts wife) or version B (woman texts husband) of the self-completion; all respondents (bank statement scenario)

The extent to which these two controlling behaviours (a husband sending a number of texts throughout the evening and a husband looking at his wife's bank statements) were perceived to cause 'a **great deal of harm**' differed by gender.

Figure 4.2 shows that, for both examples, a significantly higher proportion of women than men believed that controlling behaviour caused ‘a great deal’ of harm. Nearly half (47%) of women, compared with less than a third (31%) of men, thought that a husband looking at his wife’s bank statements would cause ‘a great deal’ of harm. Similarly, around a third (36%) of women compared with one-fifth of men (20%), thought that a husband sending a number of texts throughout the evening to his wife to ask where she is and when she will get home would cause ‘a great deal’ of harm.

Figure 4.2: Belief that controlling behaviour causes a great deal of harm by gender (2019, %)



Base = All respondents who completed version A of the self-completion (man texts wife scenario); all respondents (bank statement scenario)

The proportion of people who thought that a husband insisting on looking at his wife’s bank statement without showing her his own would cause ‘a great deal’ of harm increased from 34% in 2014 to 39% in 2019. The proportion of women who believed this increased by 7 percentage points, from 40% in 2014 to 47% in 2019. Among men, there was a slight but not statistically significant increase, from 27% in 2014 to 31% in 2019.²⁴

²⁴ The question on a man sending a number of texts to his wife throughout the evening was not asked in 2014.

Chapter 5 – Sexual harassment and stalking

This chapter reports views on sexual harassment in five contrasting settings and with different relationships between the perpetrator and victim: sexual harassment in the workplace, wolf-whistling on the street, stalking (in person and online) and posting naked pictures online of someone else. It also examines views on someone telling a sexist joke and explores respondents' views on the likelihood of them personally acting in response to the joke telling.

Since 2010 stalking has been a specific criminal offence in Scotland, brought in as part of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010. The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) has collected data about people's experience of stalking and sexual harassment since 2016. The most recent SCJS (2016/2018) figures show that just over 1 in 10 adults (11%) reported having experienced any type of stalking or harassment in the year prior to the interview. This includes a wide range of types of unwanted behaviour, including both offline and online activity, and direct messaging. Eight percent of people in Scotland reported having received unwanted messages by text/email/messenger or social media, 6% having received unwanted phone calls and 1% reported experiencing someone loitering outside their home or workplace (Scottish Government, 2019).

In recent years, the use of the internet to distribute and share intimate pictures of people without their consent has become a political and legal issue. Typically used as an act of revenge, this behaviour has come to be known as 'revenge porn'. In 2016, the Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act made it an offence to show intimate photographs or film, send them to another person, upload them to a website, or threaten to do so, without the consent of the person shown in the image. Latest figures from the SCJS (2016/2018) indicate that 0.4% of people experienced this kind of sexual harassment in the previous year (Scottish Government, 2019).

In 2019, questions used in SSA to explore people's attitudes to sexual harassment were based on a number of different scenarios. As in 2014, a range of different types of sexual harassment were included to explore the extent to which people's attitudes vary depending on the type of harassment and the circumstances in which it takes place. As was the case for scenarios on abuse and violence explored in earlier chapters, in each case respondents were asked what they thought of the man's, or men's, behaviour on a 7-point scale where 1 was 'not wrong at all' and 7 was 'very seriously wrong'. Respondents were also asked how much harm they thought these actions did to the woman in the case of sexual harassment in the workplace.

The first section of this chapter examines three of the scenarios, all of which were included in both 2014 and 2019: sexual harassment in the workplace, wolf whistling by a group of strangers, and stalking by an ex-boyfriend. These three scenarios were worded as follows:

Sexual harassment in the workplace: 'Imagine a woman who has always got on fine with her boss. Recently he has told her how pretty she is and has started touching her shoulder whenever he speaks to her.'

Wolf whistling by a group of strangers: 'Imagine a woman is walking down the street. She passes a group of men who start wolf-whistling and saying things like "hey sexy" to her.'

Stalking by an ex-boyfriend: 'Imagine a woman who broke up with her boyfriend a few months ago. He wants them to get back together, she does not. He has been sending flowers and gifts to her work and home even though she has told him she doesn't want them.'²⁵

It should be noted that each of these scenarios represents a different type of relationship between the perpetrator and victim, which contain elements, in addition to the gender dynamic, which are also likely to inform people's responses. The first question is about a relationship which involves a power dynamic between a boss and employee, the second is between strangers and the third represents stalking where there has previously been an intimate relationship.

Online sexual harassment is discussed later in this chapter.

How wrong and harmful do people think sexual harassment is?

Table 5.1 highlights views on the first three sexual harassment scenarios explored: sexual harassment in the workplace, wolf whistling by a group of strangers and stalking by an ex-boyfriend. For each of these types of sexual harassment, the vast majority of people believed that they were **wrong** (with a score of at least 5 out of 7 on the scale). Four in five people (80%) felt the behaviour of the boss was wrong, whilst the proportions who felt the same about the group of men wolf-whistling and the man sending unwanted gifts to his ex-girlfriend stood at 76% and 74% respectively.

Sexual harassment in the workplace was the scenario most likely to be considered 'very seriously wrong', with almost half (45%) viewing the behaviour of the boss touching an employee's shoulder in this way. By comparison, around 4 in 10 (39%) thought that a group of men wolf-whistling at a woman was 'very seriously wrong', and 3 in 10 (30%) thought the behaviour of the man sending unwanted gifts to his ex-girlfriend was 'very seriously wrong'. It is clear that a majority of people believe these types of sexually harassing behaviour are wrong, although they are not viewed as negatively as some of the other abusive behaviours discussed in this report, including domestic abuse (7 in 10 people viewed verbal domestic abuse as 'very seriously wrong', and 9 in 10 said the same of physical domestic abuse).

²⁵ This scenario could also be considered as domestic abuse and be prosecuted under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018.

While views on workplace sexual harassment did not change substantially between 2014 and 2019, views on some of the other sexually harassing behaviours did. The biggest shift in attitudes between 2014 and 2019 related to the perceived wrongness of a group of men wolf-whistling to a woman walking down the street. In 2014 a quarter (25%) of people described the behaviour of the men as ‘very seriously wrong’, increasing by 14 percentage points to 39% in 2019. There has also been a substantial change in the number of people who thought that this behaviour was wrong (giving it a score of 5 or more on the scale): 66% in 2014 compared with 76% in 2019. People were also more likely to report that the behaviour of the man sending unwanted gifts to his ex-girlfriend was wrong in 2019 than was the case five years previously. In 2019, 3 in 10 (30%) felt the man’s behaviour was ‘very seriously wrong’, an eleven-percentage-point increase from 2014 (19%), whilst the percentage who gave this behaviour a score of 5 or more on the scale also increased by a similar proportion (62% in 2014 compared with 74% in 2019). Although there was no significant change between 2014 and 2019 in the proportion who felt that the boss touching an employee’s shoulder was ‘very seriously wrong’, there has been a small but significant increase in the proportion who felt that the behaviour was ‘not wrong’ (a score of 1-3 on the scale). In 2014, 9% said they felt the boss’ behaviour was ‘not wrong’, increasing to 12% in 2019.

Table 5.1: Attitudes towards sexual harassment in the workplace, wolf-whistling and a man sending unwanted gifts to his ex-girlfriend

	Boss touching shoulder (%)		Group of men wolf-whistling (%)		Man sending unwanted gifts to ex-girlfriend (%)	
	2014	2019	2014	2019	2014	2019
7 Very seriously wrong	46	45	25	39	19	30
6	21	22	20	19	20	24
5	15	12	21	18	23	20
4	8	8	15	10	18	11
3	4	6	9	6	10	6
2	2	3	6	4	6	4
1 Not wrong at all	2	4	4	4	4	3
Don't know / Refusal	2	1	*	*	*	1
Weighted base	1,433	964	1,433	964	1,433	964
Unweighted base	1,428	952	1,428	952	1,428	952

Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion

‘*’ indicates less than 0.5 percent but greater than zero

In 2019, as in 2014, respondents were also asked how **harmful** they thought the behaviour of the boss touching the female employee's shoulder was to her, with possible answer options ranging from 'a great deal' of harm to 'none at all'. In line with views on the perceived wrongness of the boss' behaviour, there was no change between 2014 and 2019 in the extent to which people felt the behaviour harmed the woman, with around three-fifths (58% in 2014 and 60% in 2019) thinking the behaviour of the boss caused either 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot of harm' to the woman in both 2014 and 2019.

How do attitudes towards sexual harassment vary between groups?

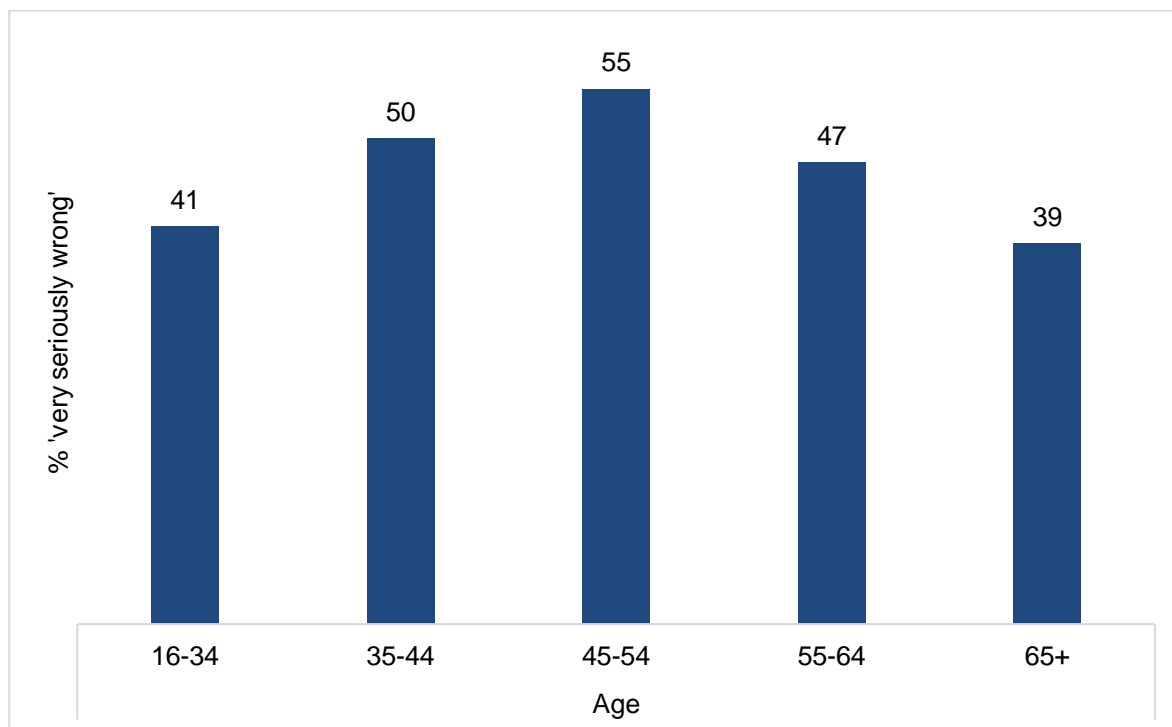
This section examines whether attitudes to sexual harassment in the three scenarios varied by the following respondent characteristics:

- Gender
- Age
- Education
- Income
- Area deprivation
- Religious identity
- Whether someone had ever experienced gender-based violence
- Whether they held stereotypical views on gender roles²⁶

Attitudes towards sexual harassment at work varied significantly between a number of groups. As shown in Figure 5.1, people aged 65 and over and those aged 18 to 34 were the least likely to think that a male boss touching a female employee's shoulder is **wrong**. Around two-fifths of those aged 65 and over (39%) and those aged 18 to 34 (41%) thought the behaviour of the boss was 'very seriously wrong', compared with around half of those in the middle age groups (50% of those aged 35 to 44 and 55% of those aged 45 to 54).

²⁶ There were no significant differences by whether people held stereotypical views on gender roles on attitudes to sexual harassment discussed in this chapter.

Figure 5.1: Believing the behaviour of the boss is ‘very seriously wrong’ by age (2019, %)



Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion

Meanwhile, those in the highest income group were the most likely to believe the behaviour of the boss was wrong. Over half (55%) of those in the highest income group thought his behaviour was ‘very seriously wrong’, compared with 42% of those in all other income groups. No other factors were found to be significantly related to attitudes to workplace sexual harassment.

Attitudes towards the **harm** varied significantly across a number of different subgroups. Whilst men’s and women’s views on the perceived wrongness of a male boss touching a female employee’s shoulder were similar, men were significantly more likely to believe the behaviour is harmful. Almost two-thirds (64%) of men thought this behaviour caused either ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of harm, compared with 57% of women.

Meanwhile, and similarly to how wrong the behaviour is viewed as being, the oldest and youngest age groups were the least likely to believe that the boss’ behaviour causes the female employee either ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of harm. Half (50%) of those aged 65 and over, and a similar proportion of those aged 18 to 34 (57%),²⁷ perceived these actions as harmful, compared with as many as 71% of those aged 45 to 54.

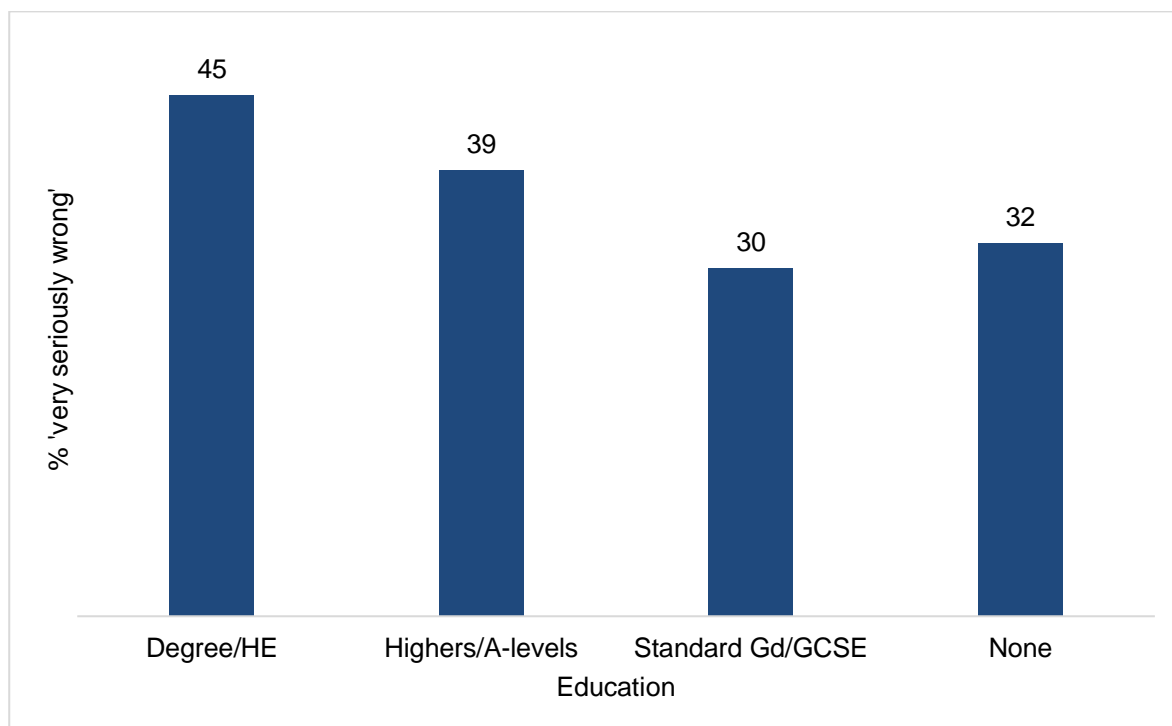
There was also significant variation between different groups in how **wrong** people believed a group of men wolf-whistling at a woman walking by to be. Although men

²⁷ The difference between those aged 65 and over (50%) and those aged 18 to 34 (57%) was not statistically significant.

and women held similar views on how wrong it is for a male boss to touch a female employee, men were more likely than women to believe that the behaviour of the group of men wolf-whistling was ‘very seriously wrong’ (43% and 35% respectively).²⁸ Age was also significantly associated with attitudes to wolf whistling, with younger people being significantly more likely than older people to say that this behaviour was ‘very seriously wrong’. Just under half (45%) of those aged 18 to 54 believed that groups of men wolf-whistling was ‘very seriously wrong,’ compared with around 3 in 10 (29%) of those aged 55 and over.

Figure 5.2 shows that those educated to degree-level were more likely to view the behaviour of the men wolf-whistling as ‘very seriously wrong’ compared with those with lower levels of education (45% of those educated to degree-level compared with 32% of those with no formal qualifications), as were those in the highest income group compared with those in all other income groups (48% and 36% respectively).²⁹ Those who have not experienced any kind of gender-based violence were also more likely to view the behaviour as ‘very seriously wrong’ compared with those who have (41% compared with 35% respectively).³⁰

Figure 5.2: Believing group of men wolf-whistling is 'very seriously wrong', by education (2019, %)



Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion

Since 2014, the proportion of people viewing the behaviour of the group of men wolf-whistling as ‘very seriously wrong’ has increased across the board, but the

²⁸ This difference is marginally significant: $p= 0.086$

²⁹ This difference is marginally significant: $p= 0.078$

³⁰ This difference is marginally significant: $p= 0.093$

change is greater in some subgroups than others. Although attitudes have changed among all age groups, there has been a much more pronounced change in the views of younger people than older people. Between 2014 and 2019, there was a 16-percentage-point increase among those aged 18 to 34 in the proportion believing the men's behaviour is 'very seriously wrong' (from 29% in 2014 to 44% in 2019), compared with only a 9-percentage-point increase among those aged 65 and over (from 20% in 2014 to 29% in 2019).

The increase in the percentage of people with no religious identity who believed the behaviour of the men wolf-whistling was 'very seriously wrong' was greater than the increase among those who identify as belonging to a religion. Over two-fifths (43%) of those with no religious identity thought this was the case in 2019, compared with just over one-fifth (22%) in 2014, a change of 21 percentage points. In contrast, the gap between 2014 and 2019 for those who identified as belonging to a religion was only 6 percentage points, rising from 26% in 2014 to 32% in 2019. In both 2014 and 2019, those educated to degree level were the most likely to believe the behaviour of the men wolf-whistling was 'very seriously wrong', and there has been a significant rise in the proportion who believed this between 2014 and 2019: 18 percentage points, compared with a 6-percentage-point increase among those with no formal educational qualifications.³¹

The third scenario considered attitudes towards a form of stalking, a man sending unwanted gifts to an ex-girlfriend. As we have seen, attitudes towards this form of harassment are less likely to be considered wrong than the two previously mentioned. There is also less variation found between groups. Interestingly, a different pattern emerges with age regarding attitudes towards the ex-boyfriend sending unwanted gifts compared with views on workplace harassment and men wolf-whistling. Those aged 65 and over were the most likely to view the behaviour of the man sending unwanted gifts to an ex-girlfriend as 'very seriously wrong', with two-fifths (40%) reporting this. By comparison, younger people were less likely to regard this behaviour as 'very seriously wrong', with a quarter (25%) of those aged 18 to 34 and 35 to 44 believing so. Since 2014, opinions towards this type of harassment have moved at about the same rate across all age groups.

The fact that there is no consistent pattern within and between groups about which scenarios of sexual harassment are wrong or harmful suggests that it is viewed differently at the individual level. Even age, which was statistically significant across all three scenarios, did not show a consistent pattern, with younger people being among the least likely to believe that a boss sexually harassing a female member of staff and an ex-boyfriend sending unwanted gifts was 'very seriously wrong', but most likely to believe that a group of men wolf-whistling at a woman was 'very seriously wrong'.

³¹ It is not clear which of these three factors – age, education or religious identity – was driving the change in attitudes between 2014 and 2019.

Attitudes towards online sexual harassment

Attitudes to online sexual harassment were gauged by presenting respondents with two scenarios and asking how they thought of the man's, or men's, behaviour on a 7-point scale where 1 was 'not wrong at all' and 7 was 'very seriously wrong'. For the 'revenge porn' scenario, respondents were also asked how much harm they thought these actions did to the woman. The first of the scenarios listed below was asked in both 2014 and 2019, allowing for a comparison in views over this period to be made. Specifically, the scenarios read:

Revenge porn: 'Imagine a woman sent some naked photos of herself to her boyfriend. After they split up, he puts them on the internet without telling her, so that anyone could see them.'³²

Stalking on social media: 'Imagine Peter knows a woman, Rachel, through a friend. Rachel uses social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. She posts something most days about what she's been up to. Peter always comments on these posts even though Rachel has asked him to stop.'

It should be noted that these questions contain several elements that could have influenced people's responses. The first question asks how people feel about a breach of trust involved in sharing something private after a relationship has ended and how wrong people feel it is for someone to have a naked picture of themselves freely available online. Responses may also be influenced by people's views about the portrayal of nudity in public in any circumstance. Responses to the second question may be influenced by people's experience of social media use and their own comfort with interacting with people online.

As Table 5.2 shows, people clearly view these two types of online sexual harassment differently. Whilst 94% view the behaviour of the man posting naked pictures of his ex-girlfriend online as '**very seriously wrong**', only 31% view the actions of the man stalking the woman on social media in the same way. The actions of the man who puts naked pictures of his ex-girlfriend online are therefore by far the most likely to be considered 'very seriously wrong' of all five of the sexual harassment scenarios asked about. In contrast, 45% of people considered the behaviour of the boss touching the female employee's shoulder, the scenario viewed as the next most serious, as 'very seriously wrong'. While the social media stalking was considered to be among the least serious, that is not to say that people did not find the behaviour wrong, as around three-quarters (75%) gave this behaviour a score of 5 or more on the scale.

³² This scenario could also be considered as domestic abuse and be prosecuted under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018.

Table 5.2: Attitudes towards 'revenge porn' and social media stalking (2019)

	Ex puts naked pictures on the internet (%)	Social media stalking (%)
7 Very seriously wrong	94	31
6	3	27
5	1	18
4	1	12
3	*	5
2	*	4
1 Not wrong at all	1	2
Don't know / Refusal	*	2
Weighted base	964	964
Unweighted base	952	952

Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion

‘*’ indicates less than 0.5 percent but greater than zero

There has been a small, but statistically significant, increase in the proportion of people who believed the actions of the ex-boyfriend posting naked pictures on the internet to be ‘very seriously wrong’ between 2014 (88%) and 2019 (94%). There was a similar level of change between 2014 and 2019 in the perceived level of harm which this action does to the woman. In 2019, over 9 in 10 (92%) thought the man’s actions caused ‘a great deal of harm’ to the woman, an increase of 5 percentage points from 2014, when 87% thought the same. It is perhaps the case that the strengthening of negative views towards this behaviour reflects the different legal context in which the scenario was presented in 2019. It was only after fieldwork ended for SSA 2014 that the UK and Scottish Governments announced plans to bring in specific legislation to criminalise putting naked photos of others online without their permission. This was followed by extensive public awareness campaigns, including ‘Not yours to share’, from the Scottish Government and various partners which aimed to both raise awareness and challenge victim blaming attitudes. In 2019, the public may therefore have been more aware of this behaviour as a criminal offence.

How do attitudes towards online sexual harassment vary between groups?

In a similar way to other sections in this report, this section examines whether attitudes to online sexual harassment varied by gender, age, education, income,

area deprivation, religious identity, whether someone had ever experienced gender-based violence, and whether they held stereotypical views on gender roles.

In the first scenario, where a man puts naked pictures of his ex-girlfriend online without her consent, two factors were found to be significantly related to attitudes: gender and income. Women were more likely than men to think that the behaviour of the man who puts naked photos of his ex-girlfriend online was **'very seriously wrong'** (95% compared with 92%).³³

Those with higher household incomes were also significantly more likely to believe the behaviour of the man was **'very seriously wrong'** compared with lower household income groups (98% of those in the highest income group compared with 91% in the lowest income group).

The significant increase of 5 percentage points between 2014 and 2019 in the proportion believing that the man's behaviour was **'very seriously wrong'**, discussed above, seems to have been mainly driven by a change in the attitudes of those in the highest income group. Between 2014 and 2019, there was a 10-percentage-point increase in the proportion of people from the highest income group who thought the behaviour was **'very seriously wrong'** (from 88% in 2014 to 98% in 2019) compared with only a 2-percentage-point increase among the lowest income group (from 89% in 2014 to 91% in 2019).

In relation to views on the level of **harm** people believed this form of online sexual harassment did, given that the vast majority of people felt this did **'a great deal'** of harm, there were no significant differences between subgroups.

In 2019, SSA asked people about attitudes to stalking on social media through persistent social media messages. As previously noted, in general people regarded this behaviour as less serious than many of the other types of harassment asked about. However, there were significant variations between groups in how **wrong** people believed this behaviour to be. In contrast to views on the previous types of sexual harassment discussed above, those in the lowest income group were more likely than those in the highest income group to believe this behaviour was **'very seriously wrong'** (42% compared with 28% respectively).³⁴ Similarly, those with no formal educational qualifications were more likely than those educated to degree-level to believe the behaviour was **'very seriously wrong'** (38% compared with 28% respectively).³⁵ Meanwhile, the only notable difference in views to online harassment by area deprivation was over the perceived wrongness of social media stalking. Those living in the most deprived areas were the most likely to think that stalking on social media was **'very seriously wrong'** (46% compared with 27% of those living in all other areas).

³³ This difference is marginally significant: $p=0.055$

³⁴ This difference is marginally significant: $p=0.070$

³⁵ This difference is marginally significant: $p=0.056$

Attitudes on the wrongness of stalking on social media also varied depending on people's experience of gender-based violence. People who had not experienced any kind of gender-based violence were more likely than those who had to think that social media stalking was 'very seriously wrong' (34% compared with 26% respectively).

The fact that none of the factors that responses were broken down by were found to be consistently associated with the different types of sexual harassment discussed in this chapter, suggests that people take a different view on sexual harassment depending on the nature of the harassment, the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, and/or the context within which it occurs.

Attitudes towards male friend telling a sexist joke

People in Scotland in 2019 now view some types of sexual harassment as more serious than they did in 2014: notably views on wolf-whistling, an ex-boyfriend sending unwanted gifts, and putting naked pictures of an ex-girlfriend online. However, in 2014 SSA did not explore views on the use of sexist language by men, which has the potential to perpetuate or sustain prejudiced views.³⁶ In 2019, SSA explored this issue by presenting respondents with a scenario about a male friend telling a sexist joke, and then asking respondents how **wrong** this is, followed by a question on how likely they would be to tell the male friend that their joke was wrong.³⁷ The exact wording read:

'Imagine you and your friends took a taxi and the journey took longer than usual. Once you've got out of the taxi, your male friend jokes that of course it took longer than usual because the taxi driver was a woman.'

'How likely would you be to tell your friend that he was wrong to make that joke?'³⁸

A male friend telling a sexist joke was clearly viewed as less serious than the other examples of sexual harassment asked about in 2019. Only a quarter (25%) viewed the friend's behaviour as 'very seriously wrong' (see Table 5.3). A similar picture emerges when considering the proportion who thought the male friend telling a sexist joke was 'wrong' by giving it a score of 5 or above on the scale. Although nearly two-thirds (65%) viewed the telling of a sexist joke as 'wrong', it was still considered the least serious of all scenarios presented (the next least serious scenario, a man sending unwanted gifts to an ex-girlfriend, was viewed as 'wrong' by 74% of people). In fact, 17% thought the friend telling a sexist joke was 'not wrong' (a score of 1-3 on the scale).

³⁶ Woodzicka, J. and Ford, T. (2010); Ford, T., Boxer, C., Armstrong, J. and Edel, J. (2008).

³⁷ The follow-up question was not asked of those who thought the friend's sexist joke was 'not at all wrong'.

³⁸ Answer options: 'very likely', 'quite likely', 'neither likely nor unlikely', 'quite unlikely', 'very unlikely'.

Table 5.3: Attitudes towards a friend who tells a sexist joke (2019)

	Friend tells a sexist joke (%)
7 Very seriously wrong	25
6	19
5	22
4	17
3	7
2	5
1 Not wrong at all	5
Don't know / Refusal	1
Weighted base	964
Unweighted base	952

Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion

Interestingly, among those who thought the friend's joke was wrong to some extent (giving it a score of 2 or more on the scale), almost two-fifths (38%) said they would be 'very likely' to tell their friend they were wrong to make the joke (see Table 5.4). This increased to around two-thirds of people (65%) who said they would be either 'very likely' or 'quite likely' to tell their friend that they were wrong to tell the sexist joke. Only 17% said they were either 'quite unlikely' or 'very unlikely' to do so.

Table 5.4: Likelihood of telling a friend a sexist joke is wrong (2019)

Tells friend sexist joke is wrong (%)	
Very likely	38
Quite likely	26
Neither likely nor unlikely	18
Quite unlikely	9
Very unlikely	8
Don't know / Refusal	*
Weighted base	907
Unweighted base	893

Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion and gave a score of 2 or above for the question on perceived wrongness of their friend's joke.

** indicates less than 0.5 percent but greater than zero

How do attitudes towards sexist jokes vary between groups?

Attitudes on the perceived wrongness of the male friend telling a sexist joke only varied significantly by household income. Those with lower household incomes were more likely than those with higher incomes to consider the joke 'very seriously wrong', with one-third (33%) of those in the lowest income group reporting this compared with around one-fifth (19%) of those in the highest income group.³⁹

Views on whether people would tell their friend that they were **wrong** to make the sexist joke varied by gender and age. Women were around twice as likely as men to say they were 'very likely' to tell their friend he was wrong to tell the sexist joke (50% of women compared with 26% of men). Younger people were more likely than older people to say that they were 'very likely' to tell their friend that he was wrong to tell the sexist joke, with just under half (44%) of those aged 18 to 44 saying this compared with a third (33%) of those aged 45 and over.

³⁹ This difference is marginally significant: p=0.054

Chapter 6 – Commercial sexual exploitation

The final chapter of this report deals with attitudes to different types of commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution and pornography. Commercial sexual exploitation is included within the broad definition of violence against women adopted by the Scottish Government described in [Chapter 1](#), which ties in with the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (OCHCR, 1993).

How wrong do people think different types of commercial sexual exploitation are?

All respondents were asked how wrong they thought four different types of commercial sexual exploitation were. In each case the response options were the same, a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 was 'not wrong at all' and 7 was 'very seriously wrong'. The four scenarios were as follows:

'How wrong do you **personally** think it is for a man (18 or over) to pay for sex with a woman, or is it not wrong at all?'

'How wrong do you **personally** think it is for an adult (18 or over) to watch pornography at home, or is it not wrong at all?'

'How wrong do you **personally** think it is for a group of men (18 or over) to go to a strip club to watch naked women, or is it not wrong at all?'

'How wrong do you **personally** think it is for a man to offer a woman the spare room in his flat in return for sex, or is it not wrong at all?'

The results for each question are shown in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Whether people consider different types of commercial sexual exploitation to be wrong (2019)

	Man pays for sex with woman %	Adult watches pornography %	Men go to strip club %	Man offers spare room for sex %
7 Very seriously wrong	38	20	21	83
6	13	10	12	7
5	13	9	15	3
4	14	11	15	2
3	7	9	9	1
2	6	11	10	*
1 Not wrong at all	8	27	17	2
Don't know/refused	2	2	2	1
Weighted base	964	964	964	964
Unweighted base	952	952	952	952

Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion

The form of commercial sexual exploitation considered to be the most **wrong** by people in Scotland, by far, is a man offering a woman a spare room in his flat in return for sex, with over four-fifths (83%) considering this to be 'very seriously wrong'. Next most likely (38%) to be considered 'very seriously wrong' is a man paying a woman for sex. Roughly the same proportion of people thought that a group of men going to a strip club (21%) and an adult watching pornography (20%) are 'very seriously wrong'. More people (27%) thought an adult watching pornography was 'not wrong at all' than thought it was 'very seriously wrong' (20%). This was the only form of commercial sexual exploitation where the proportion selecting 'not wrong at all' was higher than the proportion selecting 'very seriously wrong'.

Attitudes towards paying for sex

As well as the question on the perceived **wrongness** of paying for sex with a woman, three further questions on prostitution were asked. The first question, on the level of harm caused to a woman when a man pays for sex with her, was first asked in 2019; the other two questions were also previously asked in 2014. Respondents were asked:

‘Still thinking about a man (18 or over) paying for sex with a woman, what harm, if any, do you think this does to her?’

How much do you agree or disagree that ‘Most women who become prostitutes (also known as sex workers) could easily choose a different job if they wanted to.’?

‘Do you think it should or should not be against the law for someone to pay for sex?’

Table 6.2 shows the responses to the question on whether people thought that paying for sex with a woman causes **harm**. Over half (53%) thought that a man paying for sex with a woman does her ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of harm. Only 12% thought that either ‘not very much’ or no harm at all is done to the woman.

Table 6.2: ‘Still thinking about a man (18 or over) paying for sex with a woman, what harm, if any, do you think this does to her?’ (2019)

	%
A great deal	30
Quite a lot	24
Some	31
Not very much	8
Not at all	3
Weighted bases	964
Unweighted bases	952

Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion

In 2019, around a quarter (26%) of people said they either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ that ‘most women who become prostitutes could easily choose a different job if they wanted to’, with over 2 in 5 (44%) either ‘disagreeing’ or ‘strongly disagreeing’ and around 3 in 10 (28%) saying they ‘neither agree nor disagree’.

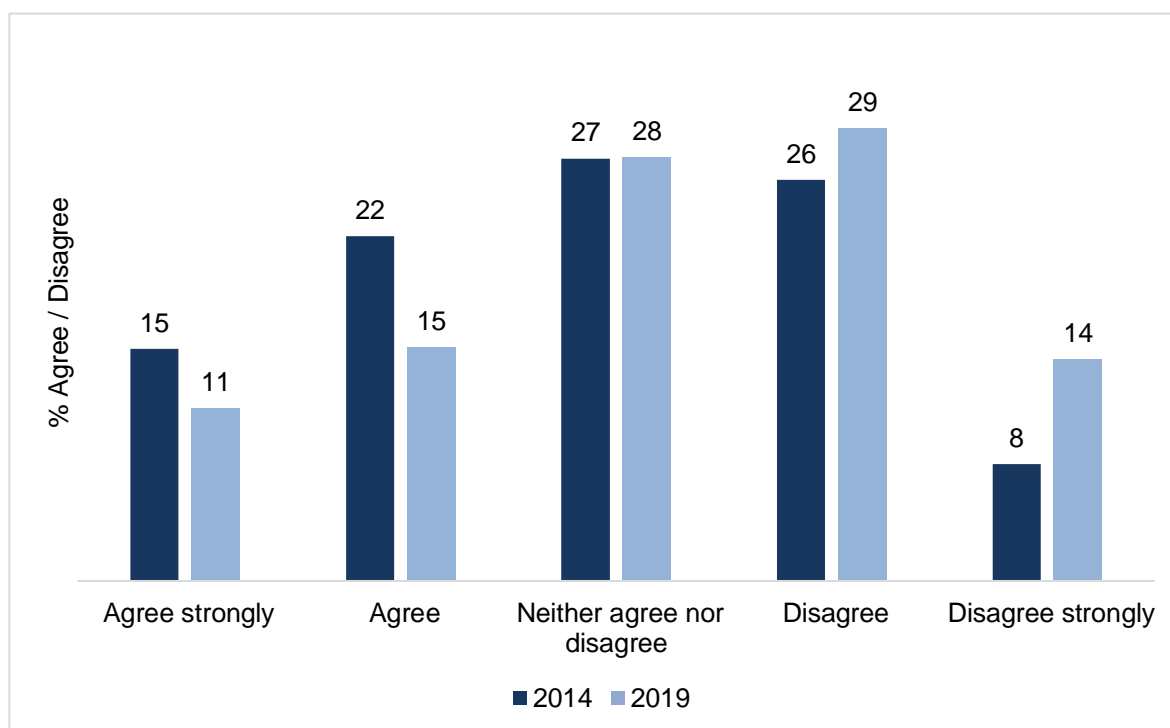
Over half of respondents thought that paying for sex either ‘definitely should be’ or ‘probably should be’ against the law (56%), with around two-fifths (41%) saying that paying for sex ‘probably should not be’ or ‘definitely should not be’ against the law.⁴⁰ Since 2014, there have been no significant changes in views on whether people think it is wrong for a man to pay for sex with a woman, or

⁴⁰ 3% said ‘don’t know’ or ‘refused’.

whether people think that paying for sex should be against the law. In 2014, 34% thought that a man paying for sex with a woman was ‘very seriously wrong’ compared with 38% in 2019, and 58% in 2014 thought that paying for sex ‘definitely’ or ‘probably’ should be against the law (compared with 56% in 2019).

There were, however, significant changes between 2014 and 2019 in views on whether people agreed that ‘most women who become prostitutes could easily choose a different job if they wanted to’. Figure 6.1 shows that the proportion of people agreeing that prostitutes/sex workers could easily choose a different job if they wanted to has declined by 11 percentage points, from 37% in 2014 to just over a quarter (26%) agreeing with this statement in 2019. The proportion disagreeing increased by 10 percentage points in the same period, from 34% in 2014 to 44% in 2019.

Figure 6.1: ‘Most women who become prostitutes (also known as sex workers) could easily choose a different job if they wanted to.’ (2014 and 2019, %)



Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion. Those who said ‘don’t know’/‘refused’ are not shown.

How do attitudes towards prostitution vary between groups?

Certain groups of people were more likely to think paying for sex is ‘**very seriously wrong**’ than others. Those who identified as belonging to a religion were more likely to think that paying for sex is ‘very seriously wrong’ (50%) than those who had no religious identity (32%). Those who held stereotypical views on gender roles were also more likely to believe paying for sex is ‘very seriously wrong’ (52%) than those who did not (34%). And those who thought paying for sex is ‘very seriously wrong’ were more likely (34%) than those who gave it a score of 1 to 6 on the scale

(22%) to agree that 'most women who work as prostitutes could easily choose a different job if they wanted to'.

Younger people and those with higher levels of education were less likely to agree that 'most women who work as prostitutes could easily choose a different job if they wanted to'. Just over one-fifth (22%) of those aged between 18 and 34 agreed that 'most women who work as prostitutes could easily choose a different job if they wanted to' compared with nearly 4 in 10 (39%) of those aged 55 to 64 and 3 in 10 (30%) of those aged 65 and over, while one-fifth (20%) of those educated to degree level agreed with the statement compared with around two-fifths (41%) of those with no formal educational qualifications. Those with a higher household income were also less likely to agree with the statement; only 15% of those in the highest income group agreed with the statement compared with 37% of those in the lowest income group. Those who identified as belonging to a religion (35%) were more likely to agree that 'most women who work as prostitutes could easily choose a different job if they wanted to' than those with no religious identity (22%), as were those who held stereotypical views on gender roles (46%) compared with those who did not (19%).⁴¹

The key difference in responses to the question on what **harm** people think paying for sex does to a woman was by gender. Women were more likely (60%) than men (47%) to say that paying for sex did either 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of harm to the woman. Those who identified as belonging to a religion were also more likely (59%) than those with no religious identity (50%) to think that paying for sex did either a 'great deal' or 'quite a lot' of harm to the woman.⁴²

On whether it should be against the law for someone to pay for sex, women were more likely (61%) to think it should be against the law than men (50%). Those who identified as belonging to a religion (65%) were more likely to think it should be against the law than those with no religious identity (51%), while those with stereotypical views on gender roles (63%) were more likely to think it should be illegal than those who did not hold these views (54%).

Attitudes towards pornography

All respondents were asked how **wrong** they think it is for an adult to watch pornography at home. As shown in Table 6.1 above, more people (27%) thought it was 'not wrong at all' than thought it was 'very seriously wrong' (20%). Half of people (50%) ranked it somewhere between these two points on the scale.

Half of respondents were also asked whether they thought teenage boys aged around 14 or 15 watching pornography was just a normal part of growing up, while

⁴¹ As people who identify with a religion, those with no formal qualifications, and those on lower household incomes are more likely to be older, it is not clear which of these four factors is driving these differences in attitudes.

⁴² This difference is marginally significant: $p=0.056$

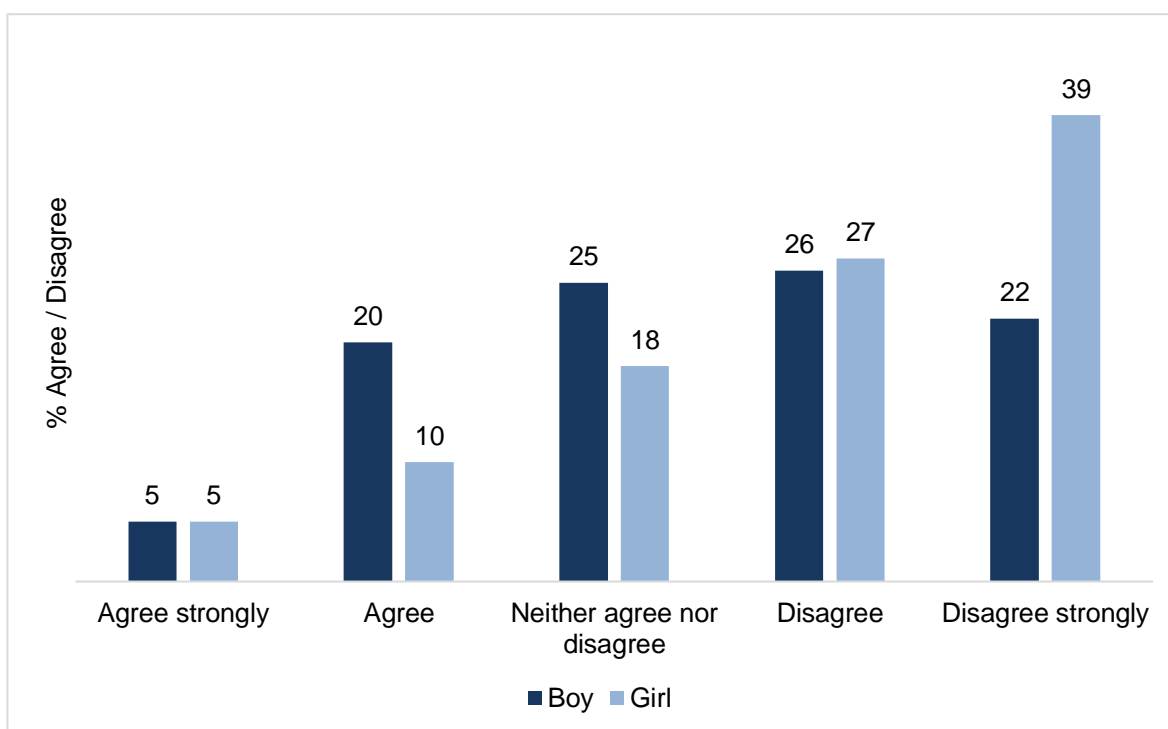
the other half were asked the same question about teenage girls. The question asked:

‘How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?’

‘Teenage boys/girls aged around 14 or 15 watching pornography that shows people having sex (not just actors pretending to do so) is just a normal part of growing up.’

Figure 6.2 shows that more people agreed that watching pornography ‘is just a normal part of growing up’ for teenage boys (25%) than agreed that it is for teenage girls (15%). Two-thirds (66%) of people disagreed that watching pornography is a normal part of growing up for teenage girls, while around half (49%) of people disagreed that it is a normal part of growing up for teenage boys.

Figure 6.2: Teenage boys/girls aged around 14/15 watching pornography is just a normal part of growing up (2019, %)



Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion. Those who said ‘don’t know’/‘refused’ are not shown.

The question on whether it was wrong for an adult to watch pornography was also asked in 2014. Between 2014 and 2019, although the proportion believing that it is ‘wrong’ for an adult to watch pornography remained stable, there was an increase in the proportion of people who thought that an adult watching pornography is ‘not at all wrong’, from 21% in 2014 to 27% in 2019. In 2014, respondents were also asked their views on teenage boys watching pornography. It should be noted that any comparisons between 2014 and 2019 must be caveated, as a similar, but not identical, question was asked about views on whether watching pornography is just

'a normal part of growing up' in 2019.⁴³ However, while keeping this in mind, between 2014 and 2019, there was an increase in the proportion of people disagreeing that watching pornography is just 'a normal part of growing up' for teenage boys, from 37% in 2014 to 49% in 2019.

How do attitudes towards pornography vary between groups?

Women were more likely (27%) than men (14%) to think that an adult watching pornography was '**very seriously wrong**'. While just over 1 in 10 (11%) of those aged between 18 to 34 thought it was 'very seriously wrong', almost 4 in 10 (38%) of those aged 65 and over thought so. Those with a lower level of education and with lower household incomes were more likely to consider watching pornography to be 'very seriously wrong' than their counterparts. Just under one-fifth (18%) of those educated to degree-level thought it was 'very seriously wrong' compared with around a third (31%) of those with no formal qualifications,⁴⁴ while 15% of those in the highest household income group thought it 'very seriously wrong' compared with 32% of those in the lowest.⁴⁵ As might be expected, those who identified as belonging to a religion (34%) were more likely to believe watching pornography is 'very seriously wrong' than those with no religious identity (13%). Those who held stereotypical views on gender roles were also more likely (32%) to consider an adult watching pornography as 'very seriously wrong' compared with those who did not hold these views (18%).

There were some differences between groups in responses to the questions on whether watching pornography is a normal part of growing up for boys and girls. Men were more likely (30%) than women (20%) to agree that it is a normal part of growing up for teenage boys, though there was no significant difference by gender when the question was asked about teenage girls. Younger people aged 18 to 34 were also more likely (31%) to consider it a normal part of growing up for teenage boys than those aged 65 and over (16%),⁴⁶ but again there was no significant difference by age in views on teenage girls watching pornography. Those with no religious identity were more likely (19%) to think that watching pornography is a normal part of growing up for teenage girls than those who did identify as belonging to a religion (9%),⁴⁷ while there was no significant difference by religious identity in views about teenage boys.

⁴³ In SSA 2014, respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed that: 'You shouldn't try to stop teenage boys from watching pornography that shows people having sex (not just actors pretending to do so); it is just a normal part of growing up'. The statement in 2019 was: 'Teenage boys aged around 14 or 15 watching pornography that shows people having sex (not just actors pretending to do so) is just a normal part of growing up'

⁴⁴ This difference was marginally significant: $p=0.068$

⁴⁵ As people with no formal qualifications and those on lower household incomes are more likely to be older, it is not clear which of these three factors is driving these differences in attitudes.

⁴⁶ This difference was marginally significant: $p=0.065$

⁴⁷ This difference was marginally significant: $p=0.094$

Other forms of commercial sexual exploitation

SSA 2019 asked two questions on other forms of commercial sexual exploitation in addition to the questions on prostitution and pornography. One of the questions – on the perceived **wrongness** of a group of men going to a strip club – was also asked in 2014, while the other question – on the perceived **wrongness** of a man offering a spare room in his flat to a woman in return for sex – was new.

As shown in Table 6.1 above, of all the forms of sexual exploitation listed, offering a spare room in return for sex was the most likely to be viewed as ‘very seriously wrong.’ Over four-fifths (83%) of people in Scotland thought it to be ‘very seriously wrong’ compared with around one-fifth (21%) who think a group of men going to a strip club is ‘very seriously wrong’. One in fifty (2%) thought a man offering a woman his spare room in return for sex was ‘not wrong at all’, while 17% classed a group of men going to a strip club in the same way.

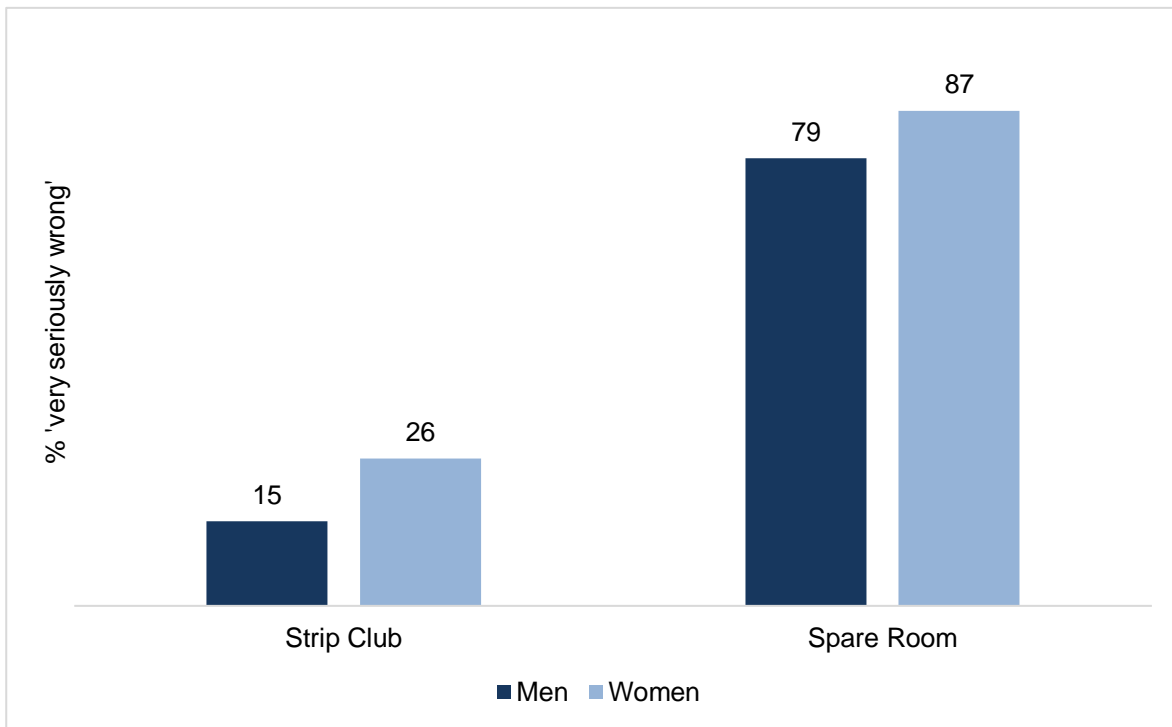
Since 2014, there has been an increase in the proportion of people who think that a group of men going to a strip club is ‘very seriously wrong’. In 2014, 14% of people thought this was the case; by 2019 this had increased by 7 percentage points to around one-fifth (21%).

How do attitudes towards other forms of commercial sexual exploitation vary between groups?

As shown in Figure 6.3, women were more likely than men to think that going to a strip club is ‘**very seriously wrong**’, with around a quarter of women (26%) saying this compared with 15% of men. There were also differences by gender in response to the question on a man offering his spare room to a woman in return for sex, with women being more likely (87%) to say this was ‘very seriously wrong’ than men (79%).

Older people were also more likely to think going to a strip club is ‘very seriously wrong’ than their younger counterparts. Around 3 in 10 (29%) of those aged 65 and over said it was ‘very seriously wrong’ compared with 12% of those aged between 18 and 34. Those with no religious identity were less likely (14%) to say it was ‘very seriously wrong’ to go to a strip club than those with a religious identity (32%), and those who held stereotypical views on gender roles (30%) were more likely to say it is ‘very seriously wrong’ than those who did not hold these views (21%).

Figure 6.3: Proportion of people who consider a group of men going to a strip club/ a man offering a woman his spare room in return for sex to be 'very seriously wrong' by gender (2019, %)



Base: All respondents who completed the self-completion

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of SSA 2014 and 2019, this chapter sets out our main conclusions in relation to the Scottish public's attitudes to violence against women – specifically: public attitudes to sexual violence; domestic abuse (physical, verbal, and psychological); sexual harassment; and commercial sexual exploitation – how these views have changed over time and how they varied between different groups in Scottish society. Building on the findings from the 2014 survey, findings from the 2019 survey will be included in future updates to the indicators for the Equally Safe Delivery Plan and will inform future work to tackle violence against women and girls in Scotland.

Overall, people in Scotland thought that sexual violence and domestic abuse were seriously wrong and that they caused 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of harm to the victim. However, the type of abuse made a difference to people's views, as did the gender of the perpetrator and the context within which the abuse took place.

Rape and physical domestic abuse

Rape by a stranger and physical abuse were the most likely behaviours, among those explored in SSA 2019, to be viewed as seriously wrong with around 9 in 10 people saying that a man raping a stranger and a man slapping his wife was 'very seriously wrong' and that it caused the woman 'a great deal' of harm. In the case of physical abuse, views were less strongly held if the perpetrator was a woman and the victim was a man, with around 8 in 10 saying this was 'very seriously wrong'. Views on the level of harm physical abuse caused the husband were even more differentiated, with only around 7 in 10 saying it would cause the husband 'a great deal' of harm compared with 9 in 10 who said the same when the woman was the victim. Similarly, rape within marriage was less likely than rape by a stranger to be viewed as seriously wrong, with around 8 in 10 saying that the husband's behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' and that it caused the wife 'a great deal' of harm.

Perhaps surprisingly, there were no differences in views between men and women on how wrong or harmful rape is, but people's own experiences did have an impact on their views. Those who had experienced unwanted sexual contact were more likely than those who had not to say that rape within marriage was 'very seriously wrong'. They were also less likely than others to believe that a woman was to blame for being raped if she was wearing revealing clothing and were more likely to disagree with the three statements about women lying about being raped.

Myths about rape

Around 3 in 10 people believed that a woman is, at least to some extent, to blame for being raped if she is wearing revealing clothing or is very drunk. Fewer than 1 in 10 people agreed with a range of different myths about women lying about being raped but over a quarter of people did agree with the myth that 'rape results from

men being unable to control their need for sex'. These findings suggest that some people believe that men are not always entirely to blame for acts of rape.

Although there were no differences in views between men and women on how wrong or harmful rape is, women were more likely than men to say that a woman wearing revealing clothing was 'not at all to blame' for being raped, as were younger people compared with those aged 65 and over. Women and younger people were also more likely than men and those aged 65 and over to disagree with all four myths about rape.

Verbal domestic abuse and coercive control

Verbal domestic abuse and financially controlling behaviour were less likely to be viewed as wrong than rape or physical abuse, with around 7 in 10 people thinking a husband's behaviour is 'very seriously wrong' if he puts his wife down and criticises her or looks at his wife's bank statements. People did not, however, think that they caused the same level of harm. Seven in ten thought that verbal domestic abuse caused 'a great deal' of harm compared with only 4 in 10 who thought the same of a husband looking at his wife's bank statements. This suggests that forms of coercive control, which have only been made criminal offences in the past few years, are still viewed as less serious in the minds of the public than the more long-established and widely discussed forms of verbal or physical domestic abuse.

Other types of controlling behaviour were seen as far less serious, with just over half thinking that a man controlling what his wife wears is 'very seriously wrong', and only a fifth believing that a man texting his wife to ask when she is coming home was 'very seriously wrong', although this increased to around two-fifths when the husband was described as texting his wife multiple times throughout the evening.

There was a clear difference in the strength of feeling about how wrong abusive behaviour is when it is directed towards a male rather than a female victim. Only around half of people thought a woman putting her husband down and criticising him was 'very seriously wrong' or that it did him 'a great deal' of harm, compared with 7 in 10 who thought the same when the woman was the victim. People were also less likely to think that a woman texting her husband to ask when he is coming home, either once or multiple times in one evening, was 'very seriously wrong' or that it did 'a great deal' of harm, than to think the same when the wife was the victim.

Across all forms of domestic abuse – physical, verbal and coercive control – women were consistently more likely than men to view the behaviours as 'very seriously wrong' and as causing 'a great deal' of harm. Even in the case where there was a male victim and a female perpetrator of verbal or physical abuse, men were still less likely than women to say the behaviour was wrong or harmful.

Across nearly all forms of domestic abuse explored in this report, young people were more likely than older people to believe that the behaviour was 'very seriously

wrong' and caused 'a great deal' of harm. The one exception to this were views on a man excessively monitoring his wife, where younger people were less likely than older people to believe that a man texting his wife multiple times throughout the evening was 'very seriously wrong'. This perhaps reflects a generational difference in the level of usage of mobile devices and messaging.

Mitigating circumstances

Attitudes towards rape and domestic abuse were shown to change depending on the behaviour of the female victim and the circumstances in which the abuse took place. When the woman who is raped by a stranger is described as first taking the man into the bedroom and kissing him, the proportion who still felt that the rape was 'very seriously wrong' declined by 24 percentage points to fewer than 7 in 10. The impact of the woman's behaviour on views within an existing relationship was even greater. Although only 1 in 7 people thought that the married woman's behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' if she first took her husband into the bedroom and started kissing him, the proportion who still believed that the husband's behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' declined by 28 percentage points to just around half. Although rape within a marriage has been illegal in Scotland for over 35 years, it appears that people still view this crime as much less serious, and as causing far less harm, than rape by a stranger. Similarly, when a wife is described as having had an affair, people were less likely to say that the husband controlling what she wears is wrong: just over half said the behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' before being told the wife had an affair, declining to 3 in 10 once people had been told that she had had an affair.

Sexual harassment

Less than half of people viewed the four different types of sexual harassment explored as 'very seriously wrong': sexual harassment in the workplace, a group of men wolf-whistling at a woman, a man sending unwanted gifts to his ex-girlfriend, and stalking on social media. A man telling a sexist joke was only thought to be 'very seriously wrong' by a quarter of people, with around two-fifths saying they would be 'very likely' to tell their friend they were wrong to make the joke. In comparison, an overwhelming majority thought that the behaviour of a man who put naked pictures of his ex-girlfriend on the internet was 'very seriously wrong' and caused 'a great deal' of harm, making it comparable with views on rape and domestic physical abuse.

Unlike for domestic abuse, where women were more likely than men to view the behaviour as wrong and harmful, it was men who were significantly more likely to believe that a group of men wolf-whistling was 'very seriously wrong' and that a male boss touching a female employee would be harmful to the woman, suggesting that there is a level of acceptance among women of these types of sexual harassment. Conversely, the evidence shows that men, and those aged under 45, were less likely than women, and those aged 45 and over, to challenge misogynistic behaviour among men, with women being around twice as likely as

men to say that they would be 'very likely' to tell their friend he was wrong to tell a sexist joke.

Differences by age did not show a consistent pattern, with younger people being among the least likely to believe that a boss sexually harassing a female member of staff and an ex-boyfriend sending unwanted gifts was 'very seriously wrong', but the most likely to believe that a group of men wolf-whistling at a woman was 'very seriously wrong'. Those aged under 45 were also more likely than those aged 45 and over to challenge misogynistic behaviour by telling a friend he was wrong to tell a sexist joke. Both those in the oldest and youngest age groups were the least likely to believe that the boss' behaviour caused the female employee either 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of harm.

Commercial sexual exploitation

Four-fifths of people thought that a man offering a spare room in his flat in return for sex was 'very seriously wrong' compared with under two-fifths who thought it was 'very seriously wrong' for a man to pay a woman for sex, and only 3 in 10 thinking that a man paying for sex with a woman does her 'a great deal' of harm. This shows that among those who believe that a man paying a woman for sex is seriously wrong, not all of them believe that it causes 'a great deal' of harm to the woman. Around a quarter of people agreed that 'most women who become prostitutes could easily choose a different job if they wanted to', while just over two-fifths disagreed with this statement.

Only around a fifth thought that a group of men going to a strip club or adults watching pornography was 'very seriously wrong', with a higher proportion believing that an adult watching pornography is 'not wrong at all'. One in four people agreed that watching pornography is a 'normal part of growing up' for teenage boys compared with around 1 in 7 saying the same for teenage girls. This suggests that there is a difference in what is deemed to be acceptable sexual behaviour for boys compared with girls.

Women were more likely than men to think that paying for sex did harm to the woman, and more likely to say that it should be against the law for someone to pay for sex. Women were also more likely than men to say that a man offering his spare room to a woman in return for sex was 'very seriously wrong'.

Women and older people were more likely than men and those aged 18 to 34 to think that men going to a strip club or an adult watching pornography was 'very seriously wrong'. Meanwhile, men and those aged 18 to 34 were more likely than women and older people to agree that watching pornography is a 'normal part of growing up' for teenage boys, but the same difference was not evident when the question was asked about teenage girls.

Holding stereotypical views on gender roles, education and religious identity

Holding stereotypical views on gender roles also impacted on people's views; they were shown to be less likely to view abusive behaviour as wrong and harmful and more likely to hold conservative views on prostitution and pornography. Specifically, those who held stereotypical views on gender roles were less likely to view rape and coercive controlling behaviour as 'very seriously wrong' and less likely to think that physical and verbal abuse causes 'a great deal' of harm. Those who held stereotypical views on gender roles were more likely to think women are to blame for being raped if they are wearing revealing clothing or very drunk, and more likely to believe that women lie about being raped.

Conversely, those who held stereotypical views on gender roles were more likely than those who did not to believe that an adult watching pornography and men going to a strip club was 'very seriously wrong'. They were also more likely to believe paying for sex is 'very seriously wrong', to agree that 'most women who work as prostitutes could easily choose a different job if they wanted to', and that it should be against the law for someone to pay for sex.

Those with **higher** levels of education were more likely to believe that rape and physical abuse were 'very seriously wrong' and that physical abuse did 'a great deal' of harm. They were also less likely to believe a woman is to blame if she was raped and less likely to believe that women lie about being raped. Conversely, those with **lower** levels of education were more likely to say that social media stalking was 'very seriously wrong' and to view watching pornography as 'very seriously wrong'.

Those with a religious identity were more likely than those without a religious identity to believe that commercial sexual exploitation was wrong. They were more likely to think that paying for sex was wrong and that it should be against the law. Taken alongside the finding that those who identified as belonging to a religion were also more likely to agree that 'most women who work as prostitutes could easily choose a different job if they wanted to', suggests a level of moral judgement on the women from those who identified as belonging to a religion. They were also less tolerant of men going to a strip club and less tolerant of pornography for both adults and teenage girls.

How have views changed between 2014 and 2019?

There were significant changes in attitudes between 2014 and 2019, with people being more likely in 2019 than in 2014 to view some abusive or harassing behaviours as wrong. The proportion who thought that rape within a marriage is 'very seriously wrong' increased by ten percentage points between 2014 and 2019, with no equivalent increase in views on a man raping a stranger. There was also a 10-percentage-point increase in the proportion who thought a woman was 'not at all to blame' for being raped if she was wearing revealing clothing or if she was very drunk. The level of belief in two myths about rape also declined, with a 15-percentage-point decline in the proportion agreeing that 'women often lie about

rape' and a 9-percentage-point decline in the proportion who agreed that 'rape results from men being unable to control their need for sex'.

Interestingly, there were no significant differences between 2014 and 2019 in views on the wrongness of either physical or verbal abuse, or most of the coercive control scenarios, although in the case of physical abuse this may be because the vast majority of people in 2014 said that they felt this behaviour was 'very seriously wrong'. The one exception was a significant increase of 16 percentage points in the proportion thinking it was 'very seriously wrong' for a husband to control what his wife wears, and a smaller, but still significant, increase of 9 percentage points in the proportion thinking the behaviour was 'very seriously wrong' when the woman had recently had an affair.

Views have changed significantly across a range of different types of sexual harassment, with increases between 2014 and 2019 in the proportion thinking the behaviour of a group of men wolf-whistling, and an ex-boyfriend sending unwanted gifts, was 'very seriously wrong'. Although the vast majority of people in 2014 believed the behaviour of a man who put naked pictures of his ex-girlfriend on the internet to be 'very seriously wrong', the proportion did increase by 6 percentage points in 2019. With regards to commercial sexual exploitation, the proportion who thought that a group of men going to a strip club was 'very seriously wrong' increased over this time period, whereas at the same time the level of tolerance around the use of pornography for adults increased.

Overall, the majority of people in Scotland believe that acts of gender-based violence are wrong, but views vary depending on the type of behaviour, the gender of the victim, the context within which the behaviour occurred, and between different groups of people. Sexual violence and physical domestic abuse are the most likely to be seen as seriously wrong, with coercive controlling behaviours being viewed as the least wrong of the domestic abusive behaviours included in the survey, and the least likely to cause harm in spite of changes in legislation and increased awareness of these issues in the past few years. Domestic abuse is consistently seen as more serious when there is a female victim compared with when the victim is male. And women are consistently more likely than men to view gender-based violence as wrong and harmful, even when the victim is male. Women were also shown to be more likely than men to challenge misogynistic behaviour. Between 2014 and 2019, attitudes towards some abusive or harassing behaviours have changed, showing that people are now more likely to view such behaviours as wrong and harmful. However, these changes have not been seen universally, and the gaps between views on the level of wrongness and harm caused by coercive control, verbal abuse, physical abuse and sexual violence remain.

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