

A study into what you might have witnessed, noticed or been concerned about relating to domestic abuse or its warning signs since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic

Participant information sheet

IRAS ID: 292428

Research Team: Alex Walker, Lara Snowdon, Rachel Fenton, Emma Barton and Prof Mark Bellis

We are inviting you to take part in a study being carried out by Wales Violence Prevention Unit, Public Health Wales and University of Exeter. Please read the information below before deciding if you would like to take part or not.

Why are we doing this study?

We know that levels of domestic abuse have increased since the government began telling us all to “stay home” to stop the spread of COVID-19. We believe that this increase is because people are now having to stay home with their abuser. This increase in domestic abuse has been called the “shadow pandemic”. Before COVID-19, victims were more easily able to seek support, but now that everyone is being told to stay at home, victims are finding it more difficult to talk to people or access support outside of their home.

We think that different people (such as neighbours, delivery workers, housemates, colleagues in internet meetings) may be noticing or having concerns about people and families where domestic abuse might be present. People who witness or become concerned about domestic abuse in other people’s families or relationships but are not themselves directly involved are called bystanders. We do not know what bystanders are seeing and how they are responding during the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe that if we can learn about bystander behaviour, we can help tackle the shadow pandemic.

Domestic abuse can take many forms and happen in many different relationships. It can happen in different sex and same sex relationships, teenager relationships, older people’s relationships, between parents and their children and with an ex-partner. Domestic abuse can be physical (punching, kicking, choking), sexual (being forced to do sex acts they do not want to), controlling behaviour (limiting access to money, friends, internet or the phone) or name calling, threats and negative remarks. If you have become aware of, seen or heard any of these behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic, we want to hear from you. We would like you to take part in a survey that we have created to explore what you may have seen or heard.

Do I have to take part?

It is completely up to you if you would like to take part in this study. It is completely voluntary. If you begin the study and change your mind, you can close down the programme

and stop answering the questions. But please be aware, once you finish completing the survey, or close down the programme, the answers you have given will be on our system and we will not be able to identify which answers are yours. This means we cannot delete your answers.

What will happen if I agree to take part?

If you would like to take part, follow the link on this page. You will firstly be given a consent form to read. If you agree with the sentences on the form, please tick the boxes. If you do not tick the boxes, you cannot get into the survey.

Next you will be directed to the survey. You will need to work your way through the survey, answering the questions. You can use the arrows on the page to go back and fore. Some questions will offer you answers and you simply have to choose which ones apply to you, while other questions may ask you to type out your answer.

When you get to the end of the survey, you may be asked if you would like to participate in an interview with a researcher from this study who wants to find out more about your experience. If you do not want to take part in the interview, you can leave this page blank and close down the survey.

What will happen to my data?

At the end of the survey, if you provide your email address to take part in the interview, this will be deleted from our systems after your interview is finished.

If you do not want to take part in the interview, we will not have any record of your name. Your survey data will be given a number so that we can follow your answers.

The survey data will be downloaded from the website onto Public Health Wales and University of Exeter password protected computers so that the research team can jointly analyse it. This data will be kept for 5 years, just in case we want to look at it or use it again.

The information we collect will be used to inform policy and practice. For example, bystander training programmes, domestic abuse charities, Welsh strategies and media campaigns. The results from this study will also be used to write a report for Public Health Wales and a paper for an academic journal. You will be able to find the results on the Violence Prevention Unit's website, or you can email the researcher below to request them directly.

What are the risks of this study?

The domestic abuse that you have witnessed may cause you upset. If you would like support, please contact Samaritans (116 123) or Victim Support (0808 168 9111).

If you are concerned about an adult who may be the victim of domestic abuse, please call Live Fear Free (0808 80 10 800).

If you are concerned about a child who may be the victim of domestic abuse, please call NSPCC (0808 800 5000).

If you think someone is in immediate danger, please stop reading this and call 999 or 101 right away.

If you are concerned or if there is a problem, you can contact the lead researcher at the address below. If you wish to make a complaint or raise concerns about any aspect of this research and do not want to speak to research team, you can contact: the Executive Director of Quality Nursing and Allied Health Professionals at publichealthwales.handlingconcerns@wales.nhs.uk

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by Research and Development at Public Health Wales, Safeguarding at Public Health Wales, Data Protection at Public Health Wales and NHS Ethics.

Contact Details

Alex Walker, Senior Public Health Researcher, Policy, Research and International Development, Public Health Wales, Number 2 Capital Quarter, Tyndall Street, Cardiff, CF10 4BZ, Alex.Walker2@wales.nhs.uk

If you would like to give feedback on this survey, please email PHW.ViolencePreventionUnit@wales.nhs.uk

CLICK HERE TO TAKE THE SURVEY