

115. The health impact on men, compared with not having the social distancing measures in place, is positive because of the higher fatality rate among men. Men represent 58% of deaths involving COVID-19 in England and Wales up to 24th April 2020 as reported by ONS⁷⁰.
116. In a survey by Britain Thinks, female respondents were more likely to indicate that they are not coping as well as usual due to the impact of coronavirus, at 34%, compared to 24% of male respondents.⁷¹
117. There are disproportionate impacts on victims of domestic violence, who are predominantly women, of having to remain at home with their domestic abuser. As of 27 April 2020 calls to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run by Refuge, have spiked significantly during the lockdown – seeing an on average increase of around 50% in calls since lockdown measures began⁷².
118. Regulation 6(2) does contain provision that is relevant to this group by specifying that leaving home to prevent illness or injury or to escape a risk of harm constitutes a “reasonable excuse” (regulation 6(2)(m)), as does accessing critical public services (such as social services or services provided to victims of crime: regulation 6(2)(i)(ii) and (iv)). However, there are mitigations which are being considered in relation to the particular circumstances of domestic violence, and the police response.
119. In response to evidence and concerns that domestic abuse may be increasing as a result of the restrictions under the Regulations, the government has taken the following steps to mitigate this impact:
- a. the Home Secretary launched a new public awareness raising campaign highlighting that if anyone is at risk of, or experiencing domestic abuse, help is still available;
 - b. a £750 million of HMT funding for the voluntary sector to support charities including those working on domestic abuse;
 - c. additionally, the Home Secretary announced an additional £2 million to immediately bolster domestic abuse helplines and online support;
 - d. putting into the regulation the clear provision individuals can leave home to avoid injury or the risk of harm
 - e. clarifying legal guidance for police that Domestic Violence Protection Orders that require perpetrators to leave the family home override the law on social distancing; and
 - f. working with domestic abuse charities and police to ensure that victims understand they should leave their home if they are under threat and that police and victims services are still there to assist them.

Sexual orientation

⁷⁰ ONS Coronavirus (COVID-19) roundup (2020)

⁷¹ Table 1 <https://britainthinks.com/pdfs/Covid19-Diaries-Data-Tables-April-2020.pdf>

⁷² <https://www.refuge.org.uk/refuge-response-to-home-affairs-select-committee-report-on-domestic-abuse-during-covid-19/>