

The Cost of Covid-19: Impact and statistics

In June 2020, Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA) launched The Cost of Covid-19 to explore the experiences and needs of victim-survivors facing economic abuse from a current or former partner throughout the pandemic.

Economic abuse is the control of a person's economic resources through restriction, exploitation or sabotage. These resources can include money, food, transportation and accommodation. Our research aimed to find out how the coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated the effects of economic abuse.

We interviewed victim-survivors and the frontline professionals who work with them to build a picture of their experiences across a number of domains of everyday life linked to economic resources.

SEA is using the rapid review findings to develop recommendations for policy and practice that would enable women to access the support they need during the outbreak and in any future public health emergencies.

This fact sheet outlines the profound impact Covid-19 and the coronavirus restrictions have on victim-survivors' lives.*

"He has carried on interfering with my house, which makes me too scared to go out to work, so ultimately I cannot work."



Employment and education

Of the victim-survivors interviewed, 43% reported that the perpetrator had interfered with their ability to work or study during the outbreak.

Reasons for being unable to work or study included:

- the abuser refusing to help with childcare or being unreliable with childcare
- the abuser not allowing access to equipment necessary for work
- the effects of abuse taking the time and energy necessary for work

Child maintenance

84% of respondents with child maintenance arrangements worried about access to child maintenance.

They either strongly agreed (**69%**) or agreed (**15%**) with the statement *"as a result of the perpetrator's actions during the outbreak, I am worried about my current access to child maintenance payments."*

Finances and benefits

Almost 4 out of 5 respondents reported that the perpetrator had attempted to control their money or finances during the outbreak – and 68% said this had been successful.



As a result of the perpetrator's actions in the outbreak, **39% of women said their financial situation had significantly worsened**, and 33% said this had slightly worsened.

About **20%** reported that the perpetrator had tried to control or interfere with their welfare benefits during the pandemic – **5%** told us this had been successful.

Some victim-survivors rely on being able to access and use cash for safety and budgeting purposes. Here, **one in five women (21%)** reported that the shift towards contactless payments during the pandemic had negatively impacted them.

Housing and accommodation

Overall, **one in three women (35%)** reported that, as a result of the perpetrator's actions during the outbreak, their housing situation had either significantly worsened (18%) or slightly worsened (17%).

Access to help and support

57% reported that their ability to seek help in relation to the perpetrator had been impacted by lockdown and social distancing.



Almost a third (31%) of respondents needed to contact the police because of the abuser during the outbreak.

In relation to the perpetrator's actions, women told us they were currently receiving support on the following:

- Child maintenance – **58%**
- Mental health or psychological support – **49%**
- Domestic and/or economic abuse – **52%**
- Legal advice – **39%**
- Money or debt advice – **21%**
- Criminal justice issues – **18%**

* These are all from people who identified as women and were based in the UK. At the time of responding, 90% of victim-survivors were not currently living with the perpetrator.

** This research was generously supported by the Standard Life Foundation (reference 202005 GR000021).