

“HOW SAFE ARE OLDER WOMEN IN HEREFORDSHIRE?”

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

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More on the story:

- Older women very often don't ask for the help and support they need for a variety of reasons including social norms, social stigma, not knowing how or where to get help, being coerced or controlled, being unaware of coercive control, or being physically or mentally unable to access help and support.
- A joint report by Safe Lives & Age UK in 2016 found that older women who experience domestic abuse are significantly more likely to have a disability (48%) compared with those who do not (16%).
- In the Femicide Census 2020 twenty-two women aged 66+ (20% of all victims) were killed by men. The oldest victim was 89-years old¹. In 2019 four victims aged over 85 and the oldest victim was 97 years old. Over a ten year period², the majority of victims were aged 26-55 **BUT** 203 (14%) were aged 66 and over. Of these, 87 were aged 66-75, 84 were aged 76-85, 30 were aged 86-95 and two were aged 96 and over. The oldest victim was 100 years old.
- Dr Hannah Bows, Assistant Professor in Criminal law, Durham Law School said in the Femicide 10year report: *“Older women as victims of men’s violence have historically been ignored. Older age has for a long time been assumed to be a protective factor against violence and abuse, even though the evidence to support such assumptions has been lacking. At a national level, we have excluded women aged 60 and over from our analysis of domestic violence, sexual violence and stalking until recently, and we continue to exclude those aged 75 and over, and/or those living in care homes, hospitals or other temporary or institutional settings. Our academic research has similarly focused on young women as victims and survivors of male violence. As a result, our policies and practices have been designed to assess and manage risk of violence in young(er) life, and we have built our support services to address the needs of that population. Consequently, we are ill-equipped to recognise and prevent violence against older women; we remain ‘shocked’ when an older woman is killed by*

1 [010998-2020-Femicide-Report_V2.pdf \(femicidecensus.org\)](#)

2 [Femicide-Census-10-year-report.pdf \(femicidecensus.org\)](#)

a man, believing this to be an unusual occurrence, when in fact my research has identified at least one in four domestic homicides involves a woman aged 60 or older, despite them constituting only 18% of the population. At least half of these deaths are committed by an adult son or grandson.”

About the organisations involved:

- **Herefordshire Women's Equality Group:** HWEG is an informal group of Herefordshire Women who wish to promote gender equality because they believe it has benefits for everyone regardless of gender or political allegiance.
- **West Mercia Women's Aid:** WMWA' s core purpose is to reduce the incidence and impact of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls in West Mercia by providing support, protection and prevention services that empower those affected by violence and abuse to rebuild their lives and those of their children. As a team of strong, dedicated women they recognise the need to work with respect, care and collaboration with service users, partners and with each other, to make sure that they can give the best to those that look to them for help and support.
- **West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre:** WMRSASC is a registered charity, that aims to provide crucial specialist front-line support, independent advocacy, counselling, help and information, for those affected by any form of sexual violence.
- **Age UK Hereford and Localities** is a brand partner of Age UK National, but an independent charity, supporting those over 50 living in Herefordshire to improve and sustain their financial, physical and mental wellbeing. We offer a range of services and work closely with partner organisations to ensure that the needs of older people are heard and supported, and that we develop our strategy in order to meet those needs.

Ends.