

Uncovering private family law: The health vulnerabilities of adults in private law proceedings in Wales

Both men and women in private law proceedings have high levels of mental health-related issues

Percentage of adults who had a mental health-related GP contact or hospital admission in the year prior to court:

Women

Those in private law proceedings

41.7%

Other similar

30.1%

Men

Those in private law proceedings

31.2%

Other similar

20.5%

They have higher levels of a range of mental health issues than their peers

Proportion of adults who had a GP contact or hospital admission in the year prior to court for a specific mental health issue, compared to other similar adults:

Women

Anxiety

2.3 times higher

Depression

2.7 times higher

Schizophrenia

2.3 times higher

Bipolar disorder

2.3 times higher

Self-harm

4.2 times higher

Substance use

3.2 times higher

Men

Anxiety

2.7 times higher

Depression

3.2 times higher

Schizophrenia

No difference

Bipolar disorder

2.1 times higher

Self-harm

4.7 times higher

Substance use

1.8 times higher

Men and women involved in private law proceedings are much more likely to have been exposed to domestic violence and abuse than other similar adults

Proportion of adults who had a domestic violence or abuse-related GP or hospital contact in the year prior to proceedings (the data doesn't record whether the adult was a victim or the perpetrator, it also doesn't capture domestic violence and abuse which goes unreported):

Women

Those in private law proceedings

19.8 times higher

Other similar adults

Men

Those in private law proceedings

26.9 times higher

Other similar adults

Source: Cusworth, L. et al. (2021). *Uncovering private family law: Adult characteristics and vulnerabilities (Wales)*. London: Nuffield Family Justice Observatory. Based on GP and hospital admissions data and Cafcass Cymru data for 18,653 adults involved in their first private family law application, either as an applicant or a respondent between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2020. Findings were compared to a comparison group of 186,470 adults in the general population of Wales with similar demographic characteristics, matched on age, gender, local authority and deprivation quintile.