The [BBC has reported](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-67458247) that a mum, Sharon Holland, is calling for perpetrators of coercive control to face manslaughter charges if their victims take their own life. This is after the sad news regarding the death of her daughter, who took her own life after what was described as ‘a year of torment’ from her ex-partner. The petition now has close to 10,000 signatures in less than two weeks and you can [read it and sign it here](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/648948).

The link between domestic abuse and mental health, especially suicide, is something we have longstanding experience of here at Woman’s Trust. We have been supporting domestic abuse survivors in London for over 25 years through our free and [specialist counselling](https://womanstrust.org.uk/what-we-do/individual-counselling/) and [therapy](https://womanstrust.org.uk/group-therapy/). We have helped nearly 20,000 women and our own data demonstrates that over a third (37%) of the women who come to us reported feeling suicidal or having contemplated suicide.

The findings are corroborated by external research – the [Agenda Alliance (Underexamined and Underreported, Feb 2023)](https://www.agendaalliance.org/our-work/projects-and-campaigns/underexamined-and-underreported/) found that women who’ve experienced intimate partner violence are three times more likely to have made a suicide attempt in the past year, rising to seven times more likely if the abuse was sexual in nature. And for the first time this year, the Home Office’s Domestic Homicides project[[1]](#footnote-1) looked at suspected victim suicides following domestic abuse. There are no reliable figures yet, but they note that such suicides may outnumber the already high number of deaths from intimate partner homicide; if confirmed, this makes visible a shocking additional consequence of domestic abuse.

This is a huge, hidden issue and we welcome moves to generate greater public awareness and force policy and lawmakers into action. We urge all Londoners to sign the Petition to seek accountability for perpetrators of coercive or controlling control, and justice for their victims.

But this is just the tip of the iceberg. Again, our own data as well as external research show strong links between domestic abuse and depression; domestic abuse and self-harm; and domestic abuse and substance misuse.

Added to this, is the postcode lottery of specialist support available to women. We have been in the unfortunate position of having to turn away hundreds of women ourselves this year, from our much-needed expert counselling and other support services.

If you can, please consider [donating](https://www.justgiving.com/womanstrust) to support our work – which is geared towards helping women process the abuse and how it has made them feel, before it gets too late.

Heidi Riedel

CEO

Woman’s Trust

1. The Home Office, Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme, National Police Chief’s Council & College of Policing. Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) Domestic Homicides and Suspected Victim Suicides During the Covid-19 Pandemic (2020 – 2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)