CONFIDENTIAL
Women’s Aid Federation of England
2005 Survey of Domestic Violence Services Findings

Author: Dr. Emma Williamson, Domestic Violence Information Manager, Women’s Aid Federation of England, March 2006.
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Appendix with detailed survey findings and explanation of methodology available from [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)
I. Introduction

1.1 About Women’s Aid

Women’s Aid Federation of England (Women’s Aid) is the national domestic violence charity that co-
ordinates and supports an England-wide network of over 500 local services working to end domestic
violence against women and children. Keeping the voices of survivors at the heart of our work, we
campaign for better legal protection and services, providing a strategic "expert view" to government
on laws, policy and practice affecting abused women and children.

In partnership with our national network, we run public awareness and education campaigns, bringing
together national and local action, and developing new training and resources. Women’s Aid provides
a package of vital 24-hour lifeline services through our publications (available in 11 languages), online
information services available at www.womensaid.org.uk and www.thehideout.org.uk, and through the
Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline (run in partnership with Refuge).

1.2 Services provided by domestic violence sector

In addition to the work carried out by Women’s Aid Federation, our national network of local
domestic violence organisations across England also provide vital direct services to women and
children. These community-based services all provide advocacy and support to women and their
children within a range of settings and locations including:

Refuge-based services providing a package of temporary accommodation, support, information and
advocacy

Outreach and non-refuge based services including a wide range of advocacy and support services, for
example:

• resettlement services - enabling women and their children to make new lives in the
community after leaving refuges,

• drop-in centres and survivors support groups,

• telephone help lines and counselling services,

• specialist court advocacy services,

• ‘floating support’ schemes - advocacy and support services provided to specific families to help
maintain their current accommodation in the community.
1.3 Our surveys

Women’s Aid conducts a survey of our national network of services each year in order to ascertain the use of domestic violence services within England. Over the past three years this has included an annual survey and a census day survey on 2 November each year. These surveys provide us with information about the number of women and children supported by Women’s Aid national network, as well as a snap shot of women and children using domestic violence services on a specific day.

This year we also undertook a residents survey to provide socio-demographic information about women residents within refuge services on census day. This survey is will continue to be developed in future years. The range and detail of the survey questions are restricted in order to make it easier for our national network of services to complete and to improve the response rate. Most service providers prioritise meeting demand for services for victims of domestic violence rather than filling in surveys.

In order to account for those services that do not respond to the questionnaire we have, over the past three years, extrapolated findings from the raw data we receive. This means that in some sections of the report we refer to estimates. The estimated figures give a more accurate picture of the actual number of women and children help seeking via our network’s services. We have identified within the report where we are referring to the number of women, children, and/or family units.

1.4 Content of the report

This report contains a summary of this year’s findings, compared with findings over the past two years. By comparing data over this time period we have been able to analyse the data for trends and consider the wider implications of changes for Women’s Aid network services within the domestic violence sector in England.

Following the summary, this report outlines the survey design and return rate for both the annual and census day surveys, before giving extrapolated findings for England. The raw data on which these findings are based, and a thorough explanation of methodology is included in the additional appendices report, available on-line at: www.womensaid.org.uk

The report then examines refuge accommodation and usage provided by our national network survey for 2004/05, as well as information about the total number of women and children provided with all services, including support, outreach, and advocacy services. There are relevant breakdowns relating to women with no recourse to public funds as well as figures for the number of disabled women and children supported within both refuge and non-refuge services. The report also includes, where relevant, data from previous years’ surveys in order to allow comparison across time.

Following an examination of findings from the annual survey the report looks at findings from the census day survey carried out on November 2nd 2005. Again, there are breakdowns in relation to different categories of women and children’ experience and help provided.

Finally, before concluding, this report outlines in detail the findings of our residents’ census day survey that was carried out for the first time in 2005.

1 See section ‘1.4 Content of the report’ for further explanation
1.5 Definitions

These terms are used throughout the report.

No recourse to public funds - women who are not eligible to make claim on the ‘public purse’ i.e., for welfare and other state benefits including access to public services including temporary accommodation. This usually, although not always, refers to women with insecure immigration status

Refuge-based services - services provided in and from a refuge house by domestic violence organisations, often alongside the provision of other community-based services

Outreach or non-refuge based services - services not provided in conjunction with accommodation, although the individual organisation may also provide refuge-based services.

All services - and/or refugee and non-refuge based services – means the total number of organisations providing domestic violence services, whether or not they are refuge-based.

Second stage refuge accommodation - refers to units which are specifically reserved for women to move into for a longer period of temporary accommodation once they move out of first-stage emergency or temporary refuge house.

1.6 Acknowledgements

The author and Women’s Aid gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the staff and refuge residents from Women’s Aid national network of domestic violence service providers for their help in responding to the survey.

Thanks also go to Dr Jackie Barron and Eleri Butler for their comments and feedback, to Nicola Harwin for feedback and editorial support, to Sally Hawkridge and Camying Tam for data entry, and to Faye Galvin and Women’s Aid Communications Team for production of the survey report.
2. Executive summary of findings

Main survey

The number of specialist domestic violence residential properties has increased steadily over the past three years. There were 3052 units in 2002/03, 3190 units in 2003/04, and 3851 units in 2004/05. This was a total increase of 26% over the 3 years.

As residential provision has increased so too has the number of women provided with refuge services. There were 17,094 women and 21,465 children seeking refuge in 2002/03. In 2003/04 this figure rose to 18,569 women and 23,084 children. This year’s annual survey demonstrated that in 2004/05 19,836 women and 24,347 children were provided with refuge-based services. This was an increase of 16% for women and 13% for children over the 3 years.

The use of all services, including non-refuge based outreach, advocacy, and support services has also increased significantly over the past three years. In 2002/03 122,570 women and 87,796 children were supported by the sector. This increased to 142,526 women and 106,118 children in 2003/4, and had risen again to 196,205 women and 129,193 children in 2004/5. This is an increase in 60% for women and 47% for children in the 3 year period.

One finding relates to the prevalence of disabled women in refuge-based services. This is the only category of women whose representation in refuge-based services has slightly decreased since 2004. In 2002/03 69 disabled women were supported by all domestic violence services; this increases massively, by 140% to 209 disabled women in 2005.

Census day survey

The annual survey figures of women and children supported by all domestic violence services are mirrored on our daily census day snapshot. In 2003, 7,487 women and 8,818 children were supported, this rose in 2004 to 8,007 women and 8,921 children. In 2005 that figure had risen substantially to 10,939 women and 11,512 children supported on any one day by Women’s Aid members across England. This is an increase of 46% for women and 31% for children over the 3 years.

Based on findings from our census day survey 3,236 women and 3,749 children are supported in refuge-based services on a typical day. This is an increase of 10% from 2,914 women and 3,555 children in 2004, and 2,786 women and 3,609 children in 2003. This is an increase of 16% for women and 4% for children over 3 years.

Over the past three years, the percentage of women with no recourse to public funds both requesting and being provided with refuge and non-refuge based services has also increased. In 2002/03, 301 women with no recourse to public funds (1.76% of total) were given refuge-based services compared with 368 women (1.98%) in 2003/04. This figure rose by 0.4% in 2004/05 to 477 women (2.4%).
On census day 177 women with no recourse to public funds and their children were provided with refuge-based services. Of these, 54% were partially funded via Social Services. The remaining 81 women and their children were supported through their local domestic violence service provider by charitable donations. An additional 54 women and their children with no recourse to public funds were turned away on 2 November 2005 because individual refuge providers could not afford to support them.

There were a total of 106 women and 180 children fleeing forced marriage who were provided with domestic violence services on census day.

47% of children resident in refuge-based support services on Census Day were under the age of 5.

Resident’s survey

On 2 November 2005, 769 refuge residents completed a survey. This found that the average age of respondents was 33 years old and that based on government census criteria, the majority of them were white. ²

Just under half of respondents ³ had stayed in an abusive relationship for three years before leaving. For 40% of those who replied, it was the first time they had left. Most respondents had been back to their abuser at least once before leaving this time. ⁴

This survey also illustrates the impact of domestic violence on employment, with 20% of respondents saying that they had lost their job as a result.

Finally, almost half of respondents said that their children had witnessed the abuse and 11% had been required by court contact orders to allow unsupervised contact with a violent ex-partner.

Information from the residents’ survey indicates that women are also seeking help earlier than in the past. As no figures for comparison are available this is purely speculative, but based on experience of the sector and evidence from other research about length of relationship and frequency of stay in a refuge, the findings would suggest that this is the case.

² 66% in total
³ 49% in total
⁴ 60% in total
3. Survey design and return rate

On 24 October 2005, we mailed 342 domestic violence service provider organisations in England with our domestic violence services survey, based on the number of services currently listed within our UKrefugesonline data system. This survey contained the following three sections:

Section 1: Annual survey for the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005
Section 2: Women's Aid annual census day survey (2 November 2005)
Section 3: Residents census day survey (2 November 2005)

The overall return rate was 65%: 223 out of the 342 domestic violence service provider organisations responded.

Some of the organisations, however, did not respond to all sections of the questionnaire either because they do not offer refuge based services and/or because specific questions might not have been relevant to their service. For that reason, we have extrapolated estimated figures, on the same basis as in previous years, in order to provide more complete statistics across the sector.

A detailed summary of the response rate for each section of the survey can be found in appendices report available from our website. The appendices report also includes a copy of the questionnaire used in this research. For further information, please contact Dr. Emma Williamson on 0117 944 4411 or e.williamson@womensaid.org.uk.
4. Survey findings

4.1 Refuge accommodation and services

4.1i Residential Properties 2004/05

During the year 2004/05, there were a total of 284 refuge organisations in England operating an estimated 729 residential properties for survivors of domestic violence. These properties provided women and children with an estimated total of 3,412 rooms in shared houses and 439 flats, units or individual houses. Of these, an estimated 209 rooms and 110 flats, units or houses were reserved for second stage accommodation.

This is 26% increase in the total number of spaces available over the past 3 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey period</th>
<th>No. of rooms in shared houses</th>
<th>No. of flats, units or individual houses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>3,412</td>
<td>439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/04</td>
<td>2,755</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/03</td>
<td>2,678</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1ii Women and children given refuge 2004/05

We estimate that 19,836 women and 24,347 children were given temporary accommodation by refuge organisations across England in this period. 19,060 women and 23,445 children were in emergency accommodation whilst 776 women and 902 children were in second stage properties.

This is an increase of 16% for women and 13% for children over the past 3 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey period</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>19,836</td>
<td>24,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/04</td>
<td>18,569</td>
<td>23,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/03</td>
<td>17,094</td>
<td>21,465</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1iii Refuge provision for women with no recourse to public funds 2004/05

We estimate 477 women given refuge during the 2004/05 period had no recourse to public funds.

This is an increase of 58% over 3 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey period</th>
<th>Women given refuge</th>
<th>% of total women given refuge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/04</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>1.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/03</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>1.76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 See outline of services section in introduction for explanation of need to differentiate between refuge and non-refuge based services in relation to specific questions.
4.2 Women and children provided with all domestic violence services including support, outreach and advocacy services

During the 2004/05 period, we estimate that 386 domestic violence service providers gave support, outreach and advocacy services to a total of 196,205 women and 129,193 children.\(^6\)

This is a 60% increase for women and 47% increase for children over the past 3 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey period</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>196,205</td>
<td>129,193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/04</td>
<td>142,526</td>
<td>106,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/03</td>
<td>122,570</td>
<td>87,796</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^6\) This includes women and children resident in refuges who also provide such services alongside accommodation.
5. Census findings

5.1 Women and children given refuge

We estimate 3236 women and 3749 children were being helped in this way on 2 November 2005.

This is an increase of 16% for women and 4% for children over 3 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census day</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02/11/05</td>
<td>3,236</td>
<td>3,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/11/04</td>
<td>2,914</td>
<td>3,555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/01/03</td>
<td>2,786</td>
<td>3,609</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Women and children provided with all domestic violence services including support, outreach and advocacy services

We estimate that 10,939 women and 11,512 children were being helped in this way [excluding national and/or local telephone help lines] on 2 November 2005. An additional estimated 4672 women were assisted on this day via local telephone help lines.

This is an increase of 46% for women and 31% for children over the 3 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census day</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02/11/05</td>
<td>10,939</td>
<td>11,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/11/04</td>
<td>8,007</td>
<td>8,921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/01/03</td>
<td>7,487</td>
<td>8,818</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Disabled women and children supported by all domestic violence services

We estimate that 275 disabled women and 132 disabled children were being helped in this way on 2 November 2005.

An increase of 140% for women and 161% for children over 2 years

Of these disabled women and children, an estimated total of 66 women and 38 children were given refuge. As a proportion of the total number of women and children given refuge on that day, disabled women make up 2% and disabled children make up 1%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census day</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02/11/05</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/11/04</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/01/03</td>
<td>Not collected</td>
<td>Not collected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 See appendices report for information about the extrapolation of estimated figures for the census day survey.
8 Excluding the National Domestic Violence Helpline run in partnership between Refuge and Women’s Aid.
5.4 Women and children fleeing forced marriage

We estimate that there were **106 women and 180 children** fleeing forced marriage provided with domestic violence services. Of these women and children we estimate that **70 women** were provided with refuge and **36 women and 180 children**, were provided with non-refuge based support, outreach and advocacy services.

5.5 The ages of children resident in refuges

We estimate that **3749 children** were accommodated in refuge houses on 2 November 2005.

The following data is prior to extrapolation and shows the proportion of children resident within refuge houses according to their age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Percentage of age group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 years of age</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 10 years of age</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 16 years of age</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6 Women with no recourse to public funds on 2 November 2005

We estimate that **177 women** with no recourse to public funds were in refuge houses on 2 November 2005. Of these women, an estimated **54%** were funded via Social Services. We also estimate that **54 women** with no recourse to public funds were turned away on the census day because the refuge organisation could not afford to provide accommodation.

5.7 Help lines

The last section of the annual survey asked respondents to tell us about whether they ran local help lines, and/or referred to the National Domestic Violence Helpline out of hours.

56%\(^9\) of services responded that they take referrals 24hrs a day.

34%\(^10\) of services run a local 24-hour helpline.

In addition, 38%\(^11\) of services responding to this specific question refer women, out of hours, via an answer machine, to the National Domestic Violence Helpline.

---

9 96 in total
10 Responses in this section are %s of the actual number who responded to this question.
11 129 in total
12 80 in total
13 80 in total
5.8 Advocacy

Advocacy is defined as follows:

“The role of an advocate is: to provide advice, information and support to survivors about the range, effectiveness and suitability of options available to improve safety; to help survivors negotiate the system, and ensure all agencies involved fulfill their obligations; and to co-ordinate and improve agency responses by taking collective issues forward to create changes that will enhance the safety and well being of survivors”.

Of the 232 organisations that responded to this question 94%\textsuperscript{14} said they did offer such advocacy services.

However, when asked about funded specialist criminal justice focused advocacy services only 7%\textsuperscript{15} said that they currently provided such a service.

\textsuperscript{14} 218 in total
\textsuperscript{15} 17 in total
6. Resident census day survey findings

6.1 Methodology

This year we conducted an additional resident census survey to provide socio-demographic information about the women and children living in refuges on annual census day. Each refuge was asked to take a sampling\textsuperscript{16} of one in four women who were in the refuge/service on census day. We received information on 769 residents.

6.2 Age

The average age of women using domestic violence services on the day of the survey was 33.2 years old\textsuperscript{17}. The following tables illustrate the number and % of resident’s ages according to actual age and age brackets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age bracket</th>
<th>Number of women</th>
<th>% of women</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 – 25 years old</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>30.7% 25 and under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 – 35 years old</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>67.7% 35 and under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 – 45 years old</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>89.7% 45 and under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 – 55 years old</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>96.7% 55 and under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 – 65 years old</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>99.7% 65 and under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 Ethnicity

The table below illustrates the distribution of ethnicity across the 769 residents included in the survey. The categories match those used by Government within the population census survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Asian or Asian British</th>
<th>Black or Black British</th>
<th>Chinese or other ethnic group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>455 white and black</td>
<td>20 Indian</td>
<td>27 Caribbean</td>
<td>36 Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2 Pakistani</td>
<td>53 African</td>
<td>36 Any other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5 Bangladeshi</td>
<td>9 Other black</td>
<td>10 Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other white</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7 Other Asian</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>510 total</td>
<td>34 total</td>
<td>100 total</td>
<td>82 total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{16} For more information please see the questionnaire in appendices report.

\textsuperscript{17} Mean average once missing variables removed.
6.4 Different kinds of abuse

We asked refuge staff to tell us the type of abuse that women were fleeing. As the table below illustrates 84% were fleeing partner abuse. In addition 1.3% of women were resident in refuges due to forced marriage, and 2.4% as a result of rape and/or sexual assault.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of abuse fleeing</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner abuse</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same sex abuse</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostitution</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced marriage</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trafficking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder abuse</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleeing other forms of</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violence against women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.5 Length of relationship

Information was provided for 626 residents who had survived a combined total of 48,744 months, 4062 years, within domestically violent relationships. The figures below illustrate the number and percentage of residents who stayed in relationships up to 15 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bracket</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 1 year</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 years</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 years</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 years</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7 years</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8 years</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10 years</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15 years</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.6 Number of times the woman has left the relationship prior to leaving this time

This question was answered by 767 women. It should be noted that for many women, this may be the first time they have left an abusive relationship but it might not necessarily be the last time. 60% of respondents had gone back to abusive relationships at least once.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of times have left</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is the first time</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.7 Help-seeking activities

Members of refuge staff were asked to indicate which of the following sources of help and assistance each woman had accessed. They were reminded women could have approached more than one source of help. Again, this question was answered by 767 women.

43% of women had been in contact with the police, 40% had confided in family members, and 38% in friends. All of those who answered were engaged in seeking help from domestic violence services provided by Women’s Aid members in England on the day of the census.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of help</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access Women’s Aid Network</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National DV helpline</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer/Solicitor</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other health care</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV website</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Group</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious leader</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.8 Employment

We asked how many women had felt the need to leave their employment as a result of domestic violence. **20%**\(^{18}\) of women said they had left employment as a result of domestic violence\(^{19}\).

Secondly, we asked women who were working prior to coming to the refuge house whether her employer was sympathetic about her domestic violence situation. Only **13%**\(^{20}\) replied positively that their employer had been sympathetic about domestic violence.

6.9 Children

We asked a number of questions about the impact of domestic violence on children. **47%**\(^{21}\) women said that their children had witnessed domestic violence with **35%**\(^{22}\) claiming that their children had been traumatised by it. In relation to contact orders and residence, **11%**\(^{23}\) women had been required to allow unsupervised contact or residence with a violent ex-partner.

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\(^{18}\) 157 in total
\(^{19}\) We do not know how many of the remaining 80% remained in employment or were unemployed.
\(^{20}\) 103 in total
\(^{21}\) 363 in total
\(^{22}\) 273 in total
\(^{23}\) 88 in total
7. Conclusions

In 2004/05, an estimated 196,205 women and 129,193 children sought help following domestic violence. It’s clear from our surveys over the last three years that as more refuge or non-refuge based services are set up, women are coming forward in increasing numbers.

The results of this survey also indicate that the domestic violence sector in England is providing a wide range of both refuge and non-refuge based services, and that non-refuge services in particular have increased in number considerably over the past few years. However, while the provision of refuge-based services has clearly been extended in the last three years, we are not able to provide evidence form the survey for a corresponding development of funding or resources for non-refuge based outreach services.

Ad-hoc evidence from our national network gathered through our annual conference, other workshops, and seminars, suggest that while some of these services did expand up to March 2005, partly as a result of some increased opportunities for funding for floating support schemes, overall funding for outreach services remains hard to access. There are currently no designated funding streams for provision of domestic violence outreach and advocacy services, although new criminal justice initiatives with specialist independent advisers (IDVAs) are now being developed (there are 17 services of this kind in the survey findings).

There is also an increase is children and young people using Women’s Aid services. This work has also been supported in the last year by the new website for children and young people developed by Women’s Aid: www.thehideout.org.uk

There is an increase in the number of women and children with no recourse to public funds that are now being financially supported for a temporary period by refuge services rather than being left destitute and in danger. This is partly due no doubt, to the increase of central support funding from Women’s Aid to local services for income and accommodation costs through our Last Resort Fund. This was supported by the Home Office and by the Sigrid Rausing Trust and ended in April 2005. It is doubtful whether next year’s figures for refuge support will continue to increase, due to the loss of this Fund.

This report also highlights a need for more and improved services for disabled women, and in particular there is a need for more refuge spaces appropriate for women with a range of disabilities and additional complex needs. The survey also raises a whole range of further questions about a) the accessibility of refuge-based services for disabled women, b) whether disabled women are choosing to access non-refuge as opposed to refuge based services, and c) whether the provision of bed spaces specifically for disabled women has increased in line with the number of bed spaces available more generally.

Women’s Aid are currently working with researchers from the University of Bristol and the University of Warwick on a Big Lottery Fund project looking specifically at provision within the domestic violence and disability sectors for disabled women who experience domestic violence. We hope in future years to be able to provide much more information about the provision of services for disabled women who are experiencing domestic violence.