

LONDON NEEDS ASSESSMENT: SAFE ACCOMMODATION FOR VICTIM/SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE AND THEIR CHILDREN

September 2021



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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This report is an **accompaniment to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) needs assessment pro forma** for safe accommodation provision for victim/survivors fleeing domestic abuse in London, under the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.

This report will **inform the development of a strategy and commissioning framework** for safe accommodation for victim/survivors fleeing domestic abuse in London.

This work has greater complexity for London as a Tier 1 authority, as it **incorporates 32 London boroughs**, that currently own the majority of safe accommodation provision.

This assessment will become an **iterative activity** to monitor and evaluate the extent to which safe accommodation provision in London meets the needs of victim/survivors.

For further detail on these findings and associated recommendations, please refer to Section 6 of this report.

Although London is currently meeting the Council of Europe's recommendation on the number of safe accommodation places for its population, the needs of victim/survivors are not being met. The new Tier 1 duty presents an opportunity for London to take a more strategic and coordinated approach to provision across London, based on the needs of victim/survivors across the capital, and agnostic of local funding pressures.

The current limitations of safe accommodation provision lead to an increased risk of victim/survivors returning to the perpetrator or experiencing further negative mental health impacts.

Current provision does not meet the needs of a number of victim/survivor cohorts, including families. A shortfall in suitable move-on provision is impacting capacity in refuges.

The current approach does not ensure quality provision.

There are no common standards for the provision of safe accommodation across London, which has led to variable levels of support for victim/survivors. It is challenging for smaller providers to deliver the level of support required by victim/survivors due to their scale and the nature of commissioning. Commissioning is often short-term and prioritises price, making it challenging for smaller, specialist organisations to compete with larger, more generic providers or invest in service improvement.

The operating model across London is not meeting the needs of victim/survivors.

Provision across London is currently commissioned and managed in siloes, predominantly by each local authority, despite the majority of victim/survivors moving across London to flee domestic abuse. It is challenging for both referrers and victim/survivors to know what support is available for them. Safe accommodation provision is not effectively integrated with community-based provision or wider services, presenting challenges for victim/survivors in dispersed accommodation and those transitioning into move-on.

The strategy needs to balance improving the quality of existing provision with expanding on it.

The quality and sustainability of existing provision requires improvement to better enable the recovery of victim/survivors, as well as increasing the capacity and breadth of provision in London.

More complete and coordinated data across demand, supply and funding will better inform future strategies.

Operational data sets do not currently come together to enable a strategic overview of need. Notable data challenges include capturing unmet demand, capturing information on children (now recognised as victims in their own right, under the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act) and capturing the support needs of victim survivors

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OVERVIEW OF OUR APPROACH

OVERVIEW OF OUR APPROACH

PAN LONDON NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR SAFE ACCOMMODATION FOR VICTIM/SURVIVORS FLEEING DOMESTIC ABUSE

Quantitative analysis

Analyse Police/Criminal Justice System (CJS)/Borough/Service provider data to create a shared understanding of the needs of victim/survivors of domestic abuse in London by establishing the:

- Scale and nature of victimisation in London, exploring volumes and demographics across different cohorts
- Proportionality, articulating any groups or communities overrepresented within the data
- Level of and nature of service provision across London
- Scale and nature of unmet demand in London

This analysis included a review of the **Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime (MOPAC) victim/survivors Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA)** – any differences in findings are based on the expanded scope and timeframes of quantitative data analysis.

Qualitative analysis

Robust qualitative analysis will complement the insights generated by the data.

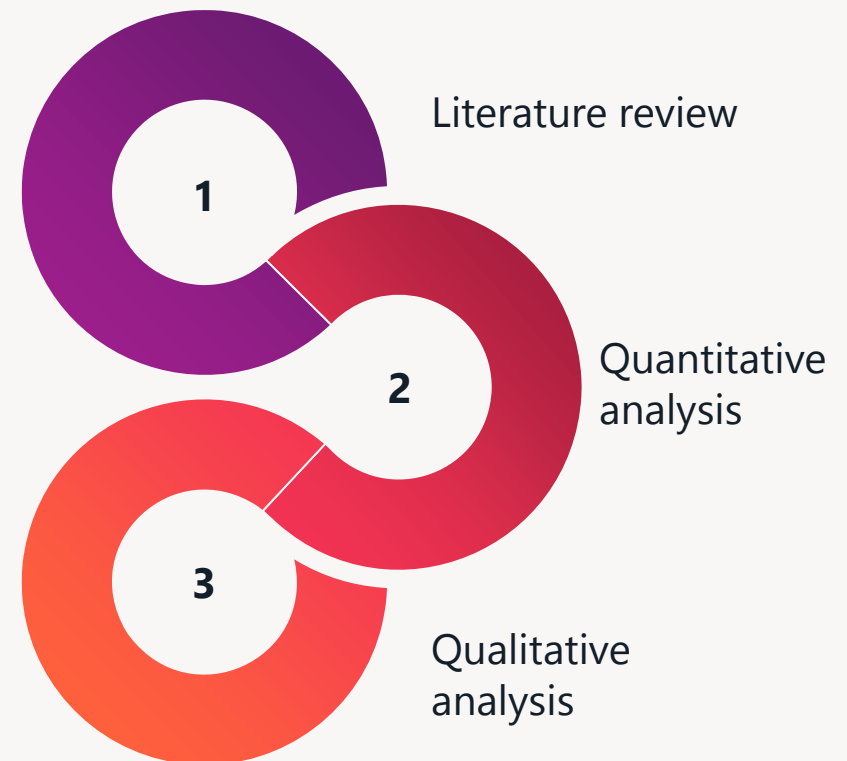
- A literature/document review – drawing out what we already know about the Act, recommendations and best practice
- 13 stakeholders engaged through interviews with providers, specialists and local authority Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) coordinators, to understand the scale and nature of both demand and provision
- Two focus groups with 18 providers and commissioners to elaborate on insights from the interviews
- Four individual victim/survivor interviews to understand personal journeys and perspectives on provision across London

OUTPUT: Completed Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) template and accompanying report

Highlighting key emerging findings from the qualitative and quantitative analysis and identifying cross-cutting themes and recommendations to inform the strategy and commissioning framework.

OVERVIEW OF OUR APPROACH

- We followed a three-phase approach to develop the emerging findings and recommendations on the future direction of the project. The three phases enabled us to develop holistic understanding of the need for safe accommodation in London and the degree to which commissioned services have met this need.
- This holistic view was based on an understanding of the work done in this field to date, an objective assessment of key data sets which present an overview of demand and provision in London, and broad stakeholder engagement to capture the views and experiences of services providers, commissioners and victims/survivors themselves.
- The approach was iterative rather than linear, allowing the findings from each phase to inform and guide the lines of enquiry in another.



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CONTEXT

THE DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT PLACES A STATUTORY DUTY ON TIER ONE LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION-BASED SUPPORT TO VICTIMS/SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE IN REFUGES AND OTHER SAFE ACCOMMODATION

Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act brings substantial changes for London in the provision of safe accommodation. This will now form part of the responsibilities of the GLA, having previously been solely commissioned by local authorities and London Councils.

As part of this provision, local authorities are expected to:

- Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support in their area for all victim/survivors and their children, including those who require specialist support and those who come from outside the area;
- Develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, with regard to the needs assessment;
- Give effect to the strategy through commissioning / de-commissioning decisions;
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy; and
- Report back to central government.

Accommodation-based support under this duty includes:

- Advocacy support
- Domestic abuse-prevention advice
- Specialist support
- Children's support
- Housing-related support
- Counselling and therapy (including group support)

Safe accommodation is defined by the Secretary of State as:

- Refuges
- Specialist safe accommodation
- Dispersed accommodation
- Sanctuary schemes
- Move-on or second stage accommodation

THE DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT DEFINES VICTIMS/SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE IN THE FOLLOWING WAY

Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “**domestic abuse**” if:

- (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are **personally connected** to each other, and
- (b) the behaviour is abusive.
- (3) Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following—
 - (a) physical or sexual abuse;
 - (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
 - (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
 - (d) **economic abuse**
 - (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse;and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a **single incident or a course of conduct**.

“**victim/survivor of domestic abuse**” includes reference to a child who:

- (a) sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse, and
- (b) is related to A or B.

A child is “**related**” to a person if:

- (a) the person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child, or
- (b) the child and the person are relatives.

“**Economic abuse**” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to:

- (a) acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
- (b) obtain goods or services.

For the purposes of this Act, two people are “**personally connected**” to each other if any of the following applies:

- (a) they are, or have been, married to each other;
 - (b) they are, or have been, civil partners of each other;
 - (c) they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
 - (d) they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
 - (e) they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
 - (f) they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child (see subsection (2));
 - (g) they are relatives.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(f) a person has a parental relationship in relation to a child if—
- (a) the person is a parent of the child, or
 - (b) the person has parental responsibility for the child.

AS VICTIMS/SURVIVORS WITH NRPF ARE NOT ENTITLED TO STATUTORY SUPPORT, THEY ARE NOT COVERED BY PROVISIONS IN THE DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT

Victims/survivors with **no recourse to public funds** (NRPF) are not entitled to social housing, local authority homelessness assistance or benefits, so they have very few ways of accessing support for domestic abuse. Under current legislation, the support available to victims/survivors with NRPF is defined by whether or not they are eligible for indefinite leave under the Domestic Violence (DV) rule, within immigration legislation.

Eligible for indefinite leave under the DV Rule

Victims/survivors who meet a certain criteria are able to apply for indefinite leave under the DV rule. Alongside this, they are also able to apply for financial support under the Destitution Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC). Due to the restrictive criteria of the DV rule, a significant number of victim/survivors with NRPF are excluded from receiving this support.

Not eligible for indefinite leave under the DV Rule

Victim/survivors who are not eligible for indefinite leave under the DV rule can seek financial support and accommodation from the local authority under the Children and Care Acts. If they are ineligible for this, then they must rely on support from the voluntary and community sector (VCS). With regard to safe accommodation, as refugees rely on some form of funding (e.g. the DDVC or welfare benefits) to pay for a victim/survivor's place, many are unable to accept victim/survivors with NRPF and others who aren't able to access Housing Benefit.

Good Practice: In response to the surge in reported domestic abuse at the beginning of the pandemic, MOPAC created an emergency response fund to provide additional capacity to existing emergency accommodation provision. This included 20 ring-fenced bed spaces for victims/survivors with NRPF. This allowed providers to accept a higher number of victims/survivors with NRPF, with 27% of total victims/survivors successfully placed in emergency accommodation having NRPF - higher than the London average of 9%. However, it is worth noting that demand still exceeded capacity, as reaching the NRPF limit was the third most common reason why referrals were assessed as unsuitable or withdrawn.

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DATA PICTURE

WE HAVE ESTABLISHED A PICTURE OF DEMAND FOR SAFE ACCOMMODATION BY LOOKING AT THE FOLLOWING DATA SOURCES

Routes to Support (RTS)

RTS is a VAWG directory managed by Women's Aid. It contains detailed and up to date information on all types of VAWG services in the UK, including information on refuge provision. Crucially, the database doesn't just include services run by Women's Aid members, but also those provided run by other domestic abuse safe accommodation providers, housing associations and other organisations.

Caveats:

- Unsuccessful placements are typically only recorded where there was already a vacancy – this metric can however be used to indicate eligibility and suitability of/for available beds.
- Routes to Support data records interactions rather than individuals, so the numbers identified through this data set do not represent unique individuals. The same woman may be counted in the data more than once, if she has been referred on more than one occasion.

Ascent Partnership

We have also used specialist refuge network data from the London Councils pan-London Grants Programme. This data is a sample of the specialist safe accommodation that exists in London. It was provided by the following 'by and for' organisations*:

- Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation
- Nia Project
- Solace Women's Aid

This data identified 1,029 'new users' of specialist refuge and services. 'New users' are defined as: 'new people into the service, refuge, outreach and attendees to the training for professionals'. We do not know what proportions of the 1,029 new users used services, sought refuge or were professionals.

In this report, we will refer to RTS data as 'refuge' data and data from the Ascent Partnership as 'specialist refuge'.

Imkaan defines 'by and for' services as 'specialist services that are **designed and delivered by and for the users and communities they aim to serve. This can include, for example, services led by and for Black and minoritised women, disabled women, LGBTIQ+ women, etc'.*

Pan-London Housing Reciprocal (PLHR)

The PLHR is a MOPAC-commissioned scheme run by Safer London. It aims to help social housing tenants affected by domestic abuse and other forms of violence (such as serious youth violence and hate crime) to avoid homelessness and relocate out of borough to alternate safe and secure social housing. It operates in all London boroughs and is not emergency accommodation.

Caveats:

- The ability of local authorities and housing associations to engage with, and provide properties for, the reciprocal is likely to have been negatively impacted by the pandemic.

H-CLIC

H-CLIC data includes households approaching their local authority for help regarding homelessness. The data covers three main duties:

- Prevention duty: owed to households threatened with homelessness within 56 days and those who were owed a prevention duty but whose homelessness has not been prevented by help from the local authority.
- Relief duty: owed to households who are already homeless on approaching the local authority.
- Main duty: owed to households who are unintentionally homeless, eligible for assistance and with a priority need. Households are only owed a main duty if they did not secure accommodation in the prevention or relief stage, so is not owed to those threatened with homelessness.

Caveats:

- This data set covers everyone who is eligible for support and presenting to the local authority. This does not include victims with NRPF, who are ineligible for support.
- As of writing this report, annual figures for 2020/21 have not been published by the MHCLG. The 2020/21 figures used in this report have been calculated using the values provided in quarterly releases.
- There is variation in the quality of the data provided by each borough, with a handful of boroughs unable to provide accurate data for every quarter.

CHAIN

The Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) is a multi-agency database that records information about rough sleeping in London. Rough sleeping is defined as people sleeping in the open air or in other spaces not designed for habitation, such doorways, stairwells, parks or derelict buildings.

Caveats:

- The data does not cover people from 'hidden homeless' groups such as those 'sofa surfing' or living in squats.
- Domestic abuse may have been a key factor leading to some cases of homelessness or rough sleeping, but may not have been recorded as such
- There is some overlap between rough sleepers in the H-CLIC data and those in the CHAIN data. The extent of this overlap is unknown and is likely to differ on at local authority level.
- Overall, the subjects of CHAIN data are overwhelming male (84%) and white (52%). However, the cut of data we analysed was specific to domestic abuse. 43% of those linked to domestic abuse were male and 62% white.

Evidence and Insight (E&I)

MOPAC's E&I team provided us with a profile on domestic abuse in London. They conducted a deep dive into a sample of domestic abuse cases reported to the Metropolitan Police in 2019, analysed various datasets - including those published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and Police recorded crime (PRC) – and generated an estimation of severity using the Cambridge Harm Index. They also included noted gaps and recommendations in their profile.

Caveats of the E&I data also include:

- PRC data does not account for repeat victimisation.
- Metropolitan (Met) Police data reflects reported crime whereas CSEW data reflects responses to a survey in relation to events which may not have been reported to the Police. On these grounds, it is assumed that CSEW provides a more complete view of the scale and nature of domestic abuse in London.
- CSEW data is for 19/20 (the self-completion element of the CSEW used to gather data on domestic was not conducted for 2020/21).
- There are a number of factors that lead to a disproportionate need for safe accommodation from particular cohorts of survivors, beyond the prevalence of domestic abuse.

Source: https://airdrive-secure.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/london/dataset/chain-reports/2021-06-30T08%3A02%3A09/Greater%20London%20full%202020-21.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAJJDIMAIWZJDICKHA%2F20210921%2Feu-west-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20210921T150020Z&X-Amz-Expires=300&X-Amz-Signature=1a305d97ec264a3ac812794ab3e9102ee8032db0bf832ea4a013f1dcfb55d681&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host

Quantitative provider survey

We surveyed 32 London boroughs and 38 providers. We received completed surveys from 25 London boroughs and 27 providers (see below).

This data has been largely used to complete the MHCLG needs assessment template - a requirement of the Domestic Abuse Act, which accompanies this report. However, a small amount of this survey data has been included on slide 34. Further survey data is not included in this report due to limitations of the extent to which it could be deemed representative of London.

Only 22 of the 27 survey providers completed the 'demographic' data questions. Of those who did, only six broke this data down by those who were successful in accessing refuge/services versus those who were unsuccessful. In addition to this, a large portion of the unsuccessful versus successful demographic data was marked as 'unknown/other'. This limited our ability to draw robust conclusions.

Boroughs:	Harrow	Richmond upon Thames	Women's Aid	LAWA
Bexley	Havering	Sutton	DePaul UK	Look Ahead
Brent	Hounslow	Tower Hamlets	Each	Mungos
Camden	Islington	Waltham Forest	Galop	NIA Ending Violence
Croydon	Kensington and Chelsea	Wandsworth	Havering Women's Aid	Refuge
Ealing	Kingston upon Thames	Providers:	Hestia	Solace Women's Aid
Enfield	Lambeth	Asha	Hounslow Domestic and-	Southall Black Sisters
Greenwich	Lewisham	Ashiana	Sexual Violence Outreach-	Standing Together
Hammersmith and-	Merton	Bexley Women's Aid	Service	Victim Support
Fulham	Newham	Bromley and Croydon's	IKWRO	
Haringey	Redbridge		Jewish Women's Aid	

Note on data periods

The data analysed in this needs assessment pertains to the 20/21 financial year unless otherwise stated. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted this field before and throughout this period. As a result of the pandemic, existing abuse intensified and options for escape reduced. 58% of providers surveyed reported increased demand for refuge. Simultaneously, the availability of Safe Accommodation fell. Between March and May 2020, there was a 42% decrease in the number of vacancies posted by refuge services to the RTS database compared to the same period in 2019. Move-on provision was also impacted: 57% of providers surveyed reported there were women ready and waiting to move-on from their refuge. Of these providers, 43% had more than 1/3 of women in this situation (see Women's Aid, 2020). We used data from the 20/21 period in order to account for the impact of the pandemic, paint an accurate picture of the current landscape and make relevant recommendations.

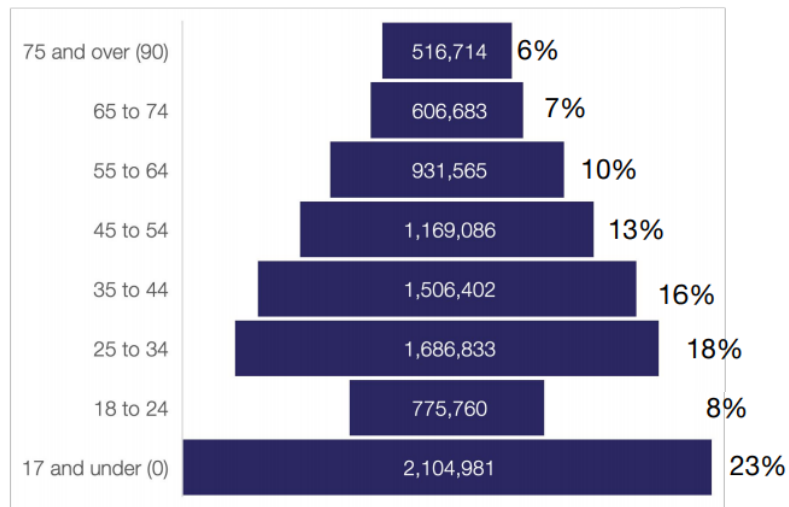
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DEMAND

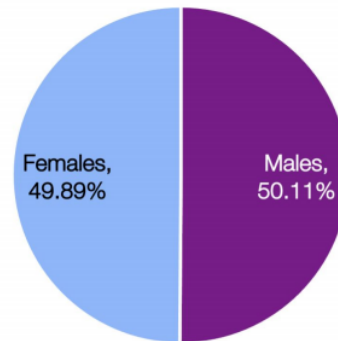
LONDON DEMOGRAPHICS

These statistics highlight the diverse nature of the population in London, which safe accommodation provision needs to serve.

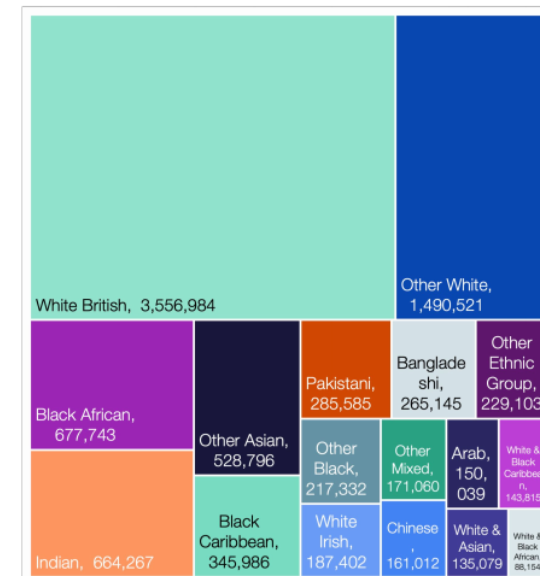
Age distribution according to GLA Housing Based projections (2021)



Gender distribution according to GLA Housing Based projections (2021)



Ethnic distribution according to GLA Housing Based projections (2021)



Source: London Data Store - [House Based 2016 population trend](#)

DOMESTIC ABUSE IN LONDON

Domestic abuse is less prevalent in London compared with the rest of England and Wales. There is conflicting data on the types of domestic abuse most often experienced.

5.5% of adults aged 16-74 in **England and Wales** reported an experience of domestic abuse compared with **3.6%** of those living in **London**. (CSEW 19/20)

In London, the rate of **domestic abuse-related crimes** recorded by the Police per 1,000 population was 10 compared with 13 in England & Wales. (CSEW 19/20)

114,886

Number of victim/survivor records held by the Metropolitan Police for domestic abuse offences in 20/21*

245,081

Number of estimated victim/survivors of domestic abuse aged 16-74 in London in 19/20.

Police recorded figures are 53% lower than those from the Crime Survey of England & Wales (CSEW)

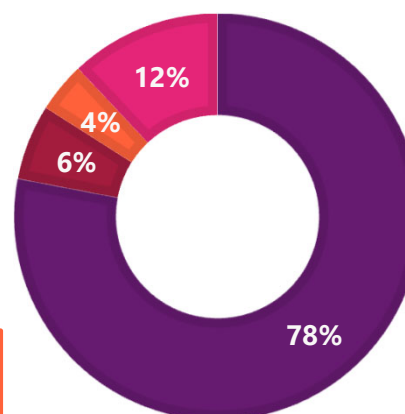
Please note that the difference in PRC and CSEW figures do not reflect severity of offences. It is possible that non-violent offences are less likely to be reported and recorded by the Police. PRC also does not account for repeat victimisation.

In 2018 CSEW (covering 17-18) year, female victims/survivors of partner abuse were more likely to experience non-physical abuse (emotional, financial = 72.6%) than physical abuse (=28%) or threats (37.8%). Male victims of were also more likely to experience non-physical abuse (57%) than threats (28.7%). This contrasts to what is captured in that PRC offences which sees violence against person as highest segment, indicating that non-violent offences are less likely to be reported to police.

The CSEW estimates 33.1 per cent of those who experience partner abuse went on to receive **medical attention** following the abuse (19/20)

Types of domestic offences recorded

■ Violence against person ■ Criminal damage ■ Sexual offences ■ Other



The proportion of domestic abuse offences recorded as 'violence with injury' in 20/21 has decreased by 13% when compared to FY 10/11

The CSEW 2018 shows a different picture to the types of domestic offences recorded by the Police. In 2018, female victims/survivors of domestic abuse were more likely to experience emotional and financial abuse (72.6%) than physical (28%). Male victims/survivors of domestic abuse were also more likely to experience non-physical abuse (57%).

H-CLIC AND CHAIN DATA

H-CLIC and CHAIN data can give us an indication of the number of victims/survivors of domestic abuse that are fleeing their homes and require refuge/emergency accommodation. It is expected there are more cases of homelessness where domestic abuse is not recorded as a causal factor, for example where a victim/survivor will have stayed with friends for a period before becoming homeless.

In 2020/21, over 49,000 households were owed a prevention or relief duty in London. 4,870 of these households (9.9%) were owed a duty as a result of domestic abuse.

Breaking this down, 1,630 households were owed a prevention duty as a result of homelessness for which domestic abuse was a causal factor in 2020/21. This accounted for 7.1% of **all** households owed a prevention duty.

3,240 households were owed a relief duty as a result of domestic abuse in 2020/21. This accounted for 12.3% of **all** households owed a relief duty. Notably, this is higher than the proportion of households owed a prevention duty as a result of domestic abuse.

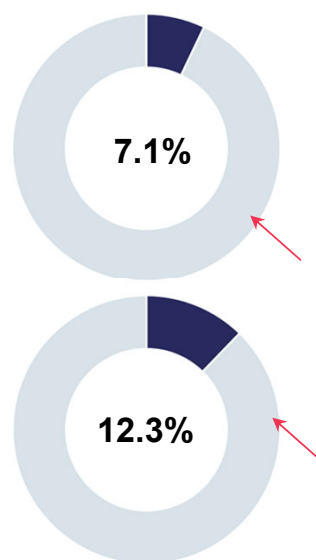
In London, 150 households owed a Main duty had vulnerability due to domestic abuse as priority need in 2020/21. This accounted for 1.4% of all households owed a main duty during that period (n=10,790). As a result of changes to homelessness duties in the domestic abuse (DA) bill, we expect this figure to rise.*.

CHAIN data shows us that there were **68 new rough sleepers** in London in 20/21 who left their last settled base due to domestic abuse. This accounts for 0.9% of all new rough sleepers in 20/21.

160 existing rough sleepers were exposed to or at risk of domestic abuse in 20/21. This accounted for 4.6% of all existing rough sleepers.

This could either suggest that households do not approach their local authority for support around domestic abuse until they are actually homeless, or that inadequate provision results in households moving from the prevention stage (where they are at risk of homelessness) to the relief stage where they are homeless.

In 2020/21, 7% of households owed a homelessness prevention or relief duty in London (n=49,420) had domestic abuse as a support need. Here, 'Support Needs' refers to areas of additional need that mean the household requires support to acquire and sustain accommodation, giving an indication of the additional services local authorities need to provide to prevent an individual becoming homeless or to stop the cycle of repeat homelessness. Multiple support needs can be reported per household, but each support need only once. Note, support needs are not the same as 'priority need' and it is possible that a household with support needs is not of priority need.



DEMAND FOR REFUGE ACCOMMODATION

Operational data can only give us a limited estimation of demand. However, providers (see DAHA and Women's Aid) are clear that demand far exceeds provision. Any measure of demand must acknowledge that almost 20% of those placed in refuge in London previously resided outside London.

The Council of Europe's (2008) minimum recommendation for refuge provision* is 1 unit per 10,000 population. There are currently an average of 1.12 in London (GLA SNA, 2021), but this target **does not take into account the additional demand from outside London.**

*where refuges are the predominant / only form of service provision for victims/survivors of domestic abuse

19.4%

Percentage of all women placed in refuge in London in 20/21 who previously resided outside London *(not included in the population base for CoE's recommendation)*

62.2%

Percentage of all women placed in refuge in London in 20/21 who previously resided in another London borough

1.8%

Percentage of all women placed in refuge in London in 20/21 who previously resided in the same London borough

Routes to Support cannot give us an accurate picture of demand but we do know **997 women were placed in refuge in 20/21**. A further **1,164** were **unsuccessful** in accessing refuge.

In quarter three 20/21, 297 women were placed in refuge by Women's Aid in London. A further 595 referrals were recorded. This suggests that **demand is substantially greater than the number of women who are successfully placed in refuge.**

As part of the quantitative provider survey, 17 providers reported receiving a total 5,911 referrals for refuge or safe accommodation. 11 of these providers reported that 3,379 of these were unsuccessful.

Note: *Instances of referral are not equal to the number of women unable to access space - it may include more than one instance of a woman being referred before going on to find refuge on a subsequent attempt. Furthermore, these figures only show demand where there is a vacancy available on Routes to Support and do not include women who call the NDVHL for a vacancy and find nothing suitable listed. We also caution that we are unable to use these data to calculate the number of referrals received for refuge vacancies in the region as we know data are not entered fully.*

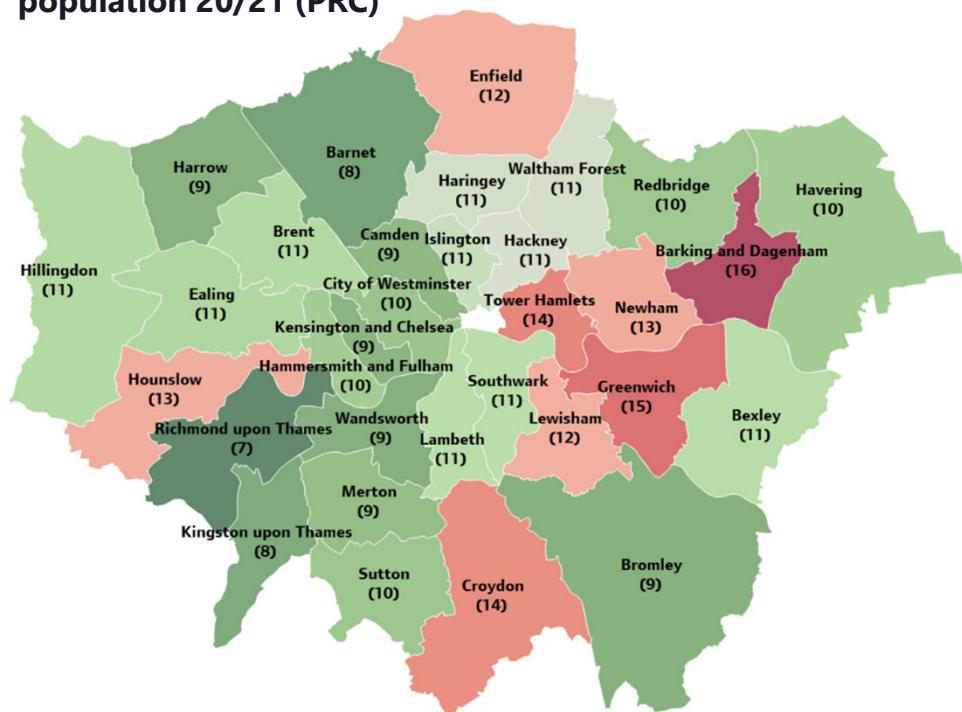
Sources: Council of Europe (2008). *Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services*, RTS' Domestic Abuse Housing and Alliance (DAHA) and Women's Aid, *Improving the move-on pathway for survivors in refuge services: A recommendations report*. Online; Quantitative provider survey.

DEMAND: WHERE?

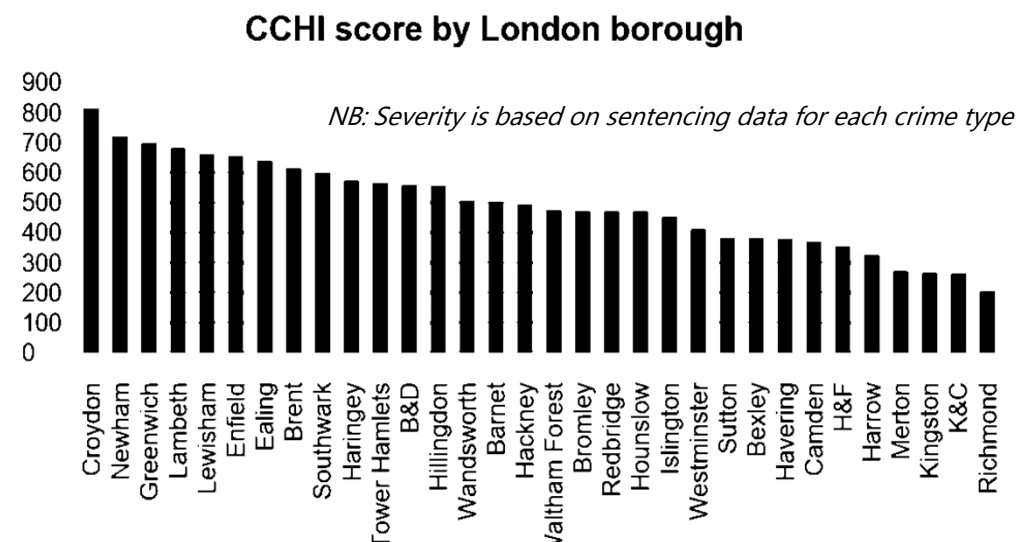
DOMESTIC ABUSE BY LOCAL AUTHORITY

Rates of domestic abuse vary across London. The boroughs with the highest rate of domestic abuse do not necessarily correspond to the boroughs with the most severe domestic abuse (as measured by the Cambridge Crime Index). Although this data indicates that the nature of required support may differ across London, we do not infer a correlation between severity of offence and need for safe accommodation.

Rate of domestic abuse offences by borough per 1,000 population 20/21 (PRC)



Cambridge Crime Index (CCHI) combines offence severity with offence volume. This graph depicts the **London boroughs with the highest to lowest severity ratings** (created using PRC data)



Please note: Measures of domestic abuse do not indicate need for safe accommodation within the same borough, as many victim/survivors will seek safe accommodation in different boroughs.

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING

There is correlation between the volumes of homelessness prevention relief duties and new rough sleepers, suggesting these areas may have a higher-than-average demand for refuge and housing.

Number of households owed a prevention or relief duty in 20/21 as a result of DA (top ten)

Borough	Count
Southwark	348
Brent	311
Lambeth	273
Barnet	259
Hillingdon	234
Havering	217
Waltham Forest	196
Westminster	194
Croydon	191
Enfield	190

Number of new rough sleepers in 20/21 (top ten)

Borough	Count
Redbridge	8
Brent	7
Enfield	6
Newham	6
Barking & Dagenham	3
Barnet	3
Camden	3
Heathrow	3
Hillingdon	3
Westminster	3

The eight boroughs with the highest rates of domestic abuse are not the eight boroughs with the highest volume of homelessness duties owed as a result of domestic abuse (e.g. Barking and Dagenham).

However, when you look at the top 10 boroughs listed in the Cambridge Crime Index data, Southwark, Brent, Lambeth, Croydon & Enfield also appear in the 10 boroughs with highest number of households owed a prevention or relief duty.

Three of the 10 boroughs with the highest number of new rough sleepers also appear on the list of top 10 boroughs listed in the Cambridge Crime Index data.

Qualitative engagement indicated that rough sleepers are more likely to require specialist provision. Islington, Wandsworth, Hounslow, Camden and Lambeth had the next highest number of new users in specialist refuge and support provision. Nearly 50% of all new users of specialist refuge and support services accessed services in these six boroughs. This suggests that there is a concentration of specialist support in only a handful of boroughs (not indicative of demand because people will have left their home boroughs to then access the provision).

Southwark had the highest number of new users in specialist refuge and support provision - accounting for 17.1% of all new users.

DEMAND: WHO?

DEMAND BY GENDER

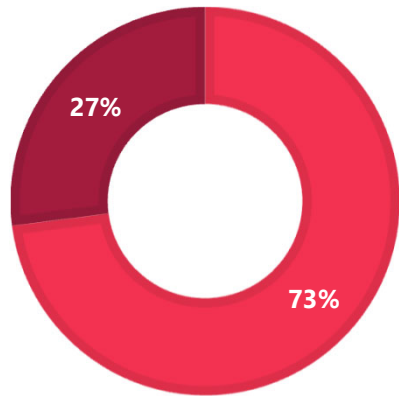
A significant and growing proportion of men are reporting experiences of domestic abuse, however, women account for a disproportionate number of victim/survivors seeking and receiving safe accommodation.

The CSEW shows that **men account for 36% of victims** of domestic abuse in 20/21, whilst PRC data shows that men account for 27% of victims of reported domestic abuse

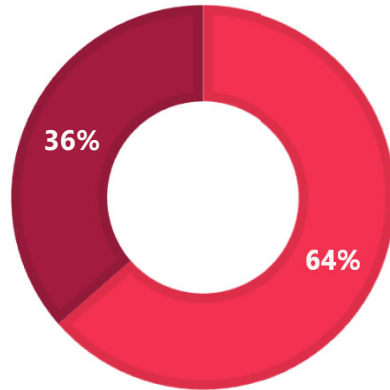
CHAIN data shows that just over **40% of victims rough sleeping in London as a result of domestic abuse in 20/21 are men**

Women account for 98% of the cases referred to the PLHR due to domestic abuse in 20/21 and 100% of successfully placed applicants.

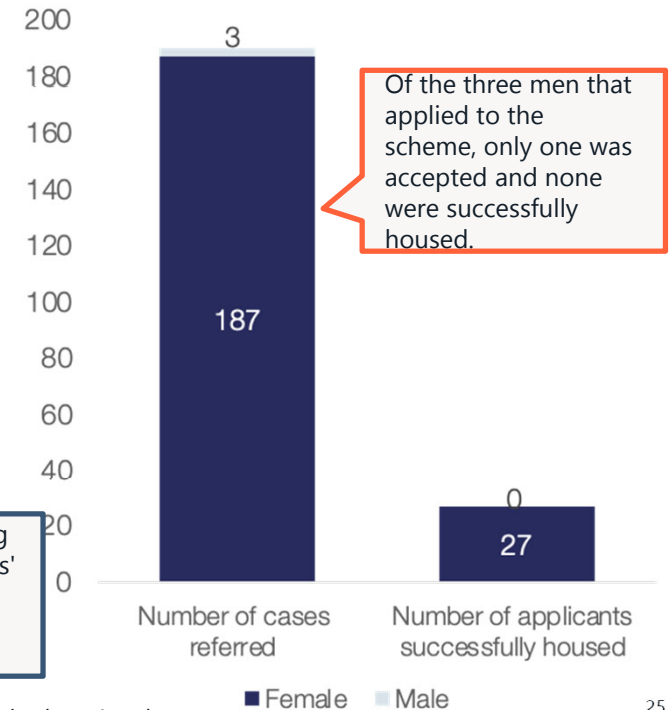
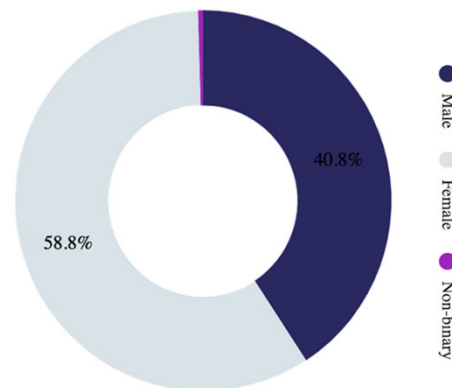
Victim/survivors of domestic abuse by gender (Metropolitan Police) 20/21



Victim/survivors of domestic abuse by gender (CSEW) 19/20



Rough sleepers in London due to domestic abuse by gender



These pie charts suggest that male victims are less likely to report domestic abuse

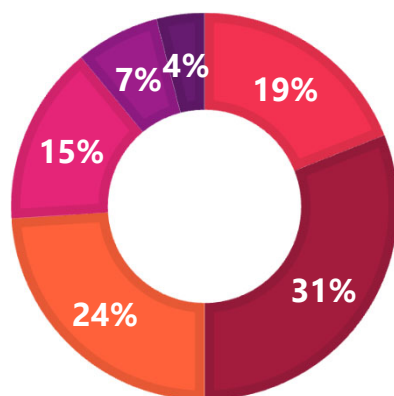
SafeLives data highlighted that 64% of female victims and survivors in London reported having children under the age of 18 in the house at the time they experienced abuse. Local authorities' duties are to ensure children do not sleep rough may be one of the reasons why men are disproportionately represented in CHAIN data. This could mean there is less emergency provision available for men.

DEMAND BY AGE

There no clear picture on which age groups are most likely to experience domestic abuse. Most datasets highlight those aged 25-40 but there is evidence that those aged 16-25 are also at high risk of experiencing domestic abuse.

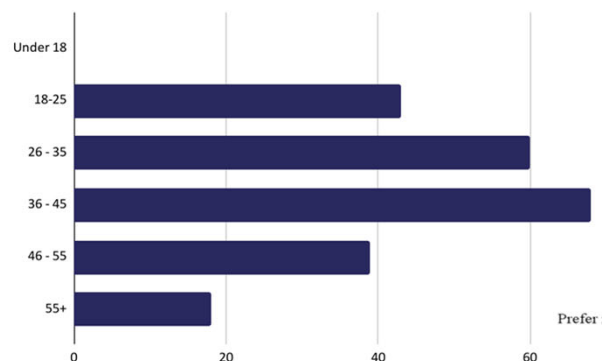
Victim/survivors of domestic abuse by age
(Metropolitan Police)

■ 16-25 ■ 25-34 ■ 35-44 ■ 45-54 ■ 55-64 ■ 65+



Police data demonstrates that **55% of victims/survivors were aged between 25-44**, with victims/survivors aged 20-34 most frequently recorded in 20/21. However, 19/20 CSEW data estimates that those aged 16-24 most frequently experience domestic abuse.

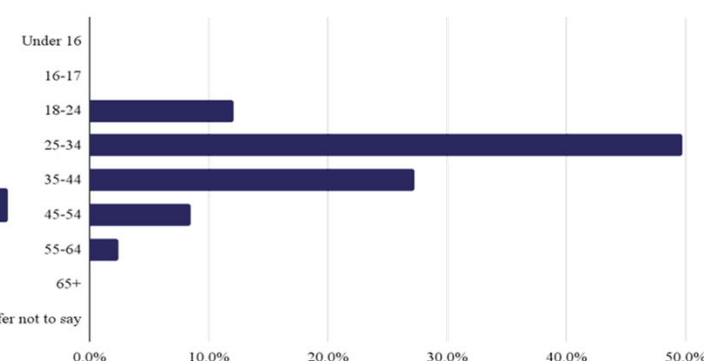
Rough sleepers in London due to domestic abuse by age



Those rough sleeping in London in 20/21 tended to be a slightly older cohort than the PRC and CSEW data suggests. This might indicate there is less provision available for those groups.

Those aged 25-34 accounted for almost half of those accessing specialist refuge, which largely corroborates PRC and CSEW data. **Those aged 18-24 account for 12% of this population**, which is higher than other datasets suggest and may reflect the type of specialist provision available.

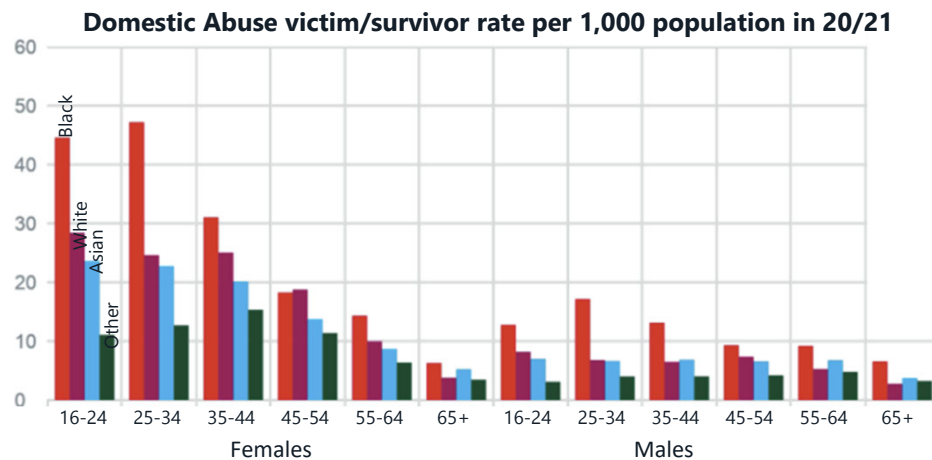
Specialist refuge provision by age



An NSPCC report (Barter et al., 2009) found that almost **25% of 13-17 year old girls** reported experiencing physical abuse in their own intimate partnership relationships. **18% of boys** reported experiencing physical abuse.

DEMAND BY ETHNICITY

Ethnic minorities are more likely to experience domestic abuse than their white counterparts. However, a disproportionate number of rough sleepers due to domestic abuse were white.



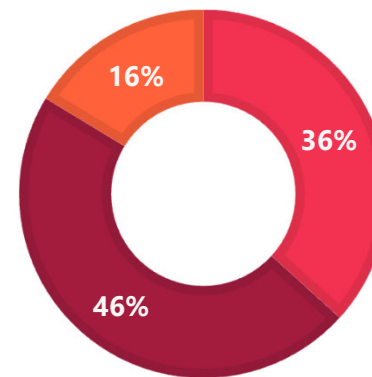
In almost every age group, relative to the population, domestic abuse victims/survivors were **most likely to be Black**.

According to the Police recorded data, the highest rate of domestic abuse victimisation is amongst Black females aged 25-34.

Black males also hold higher victimisation rates than men from any of the other ethnic groups.

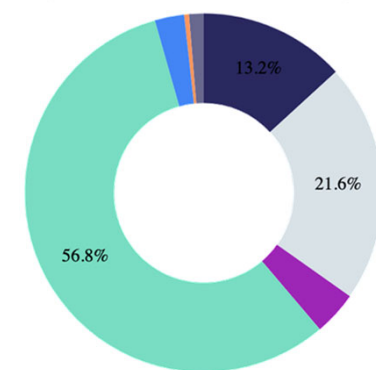
Sources: Evidence & Insight; CHAIN

Victim/survivors of domestic abuse by ethnicity (PRC) 20/21



■ Ethnic minority ■ White ■ Unknown

Rough sleepers due to domestic abuse by ethnicity 20/21

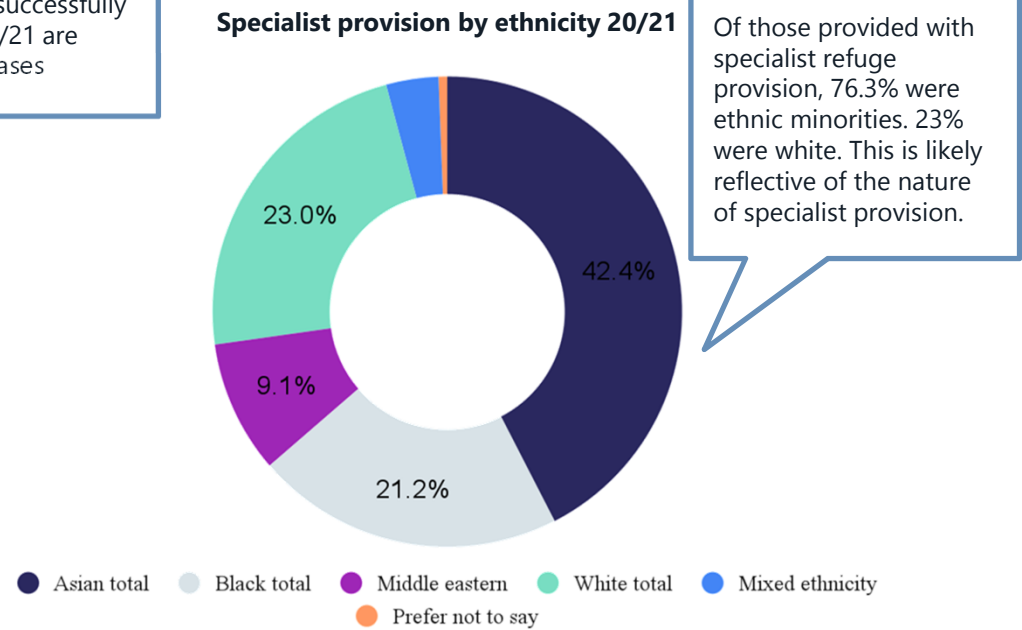
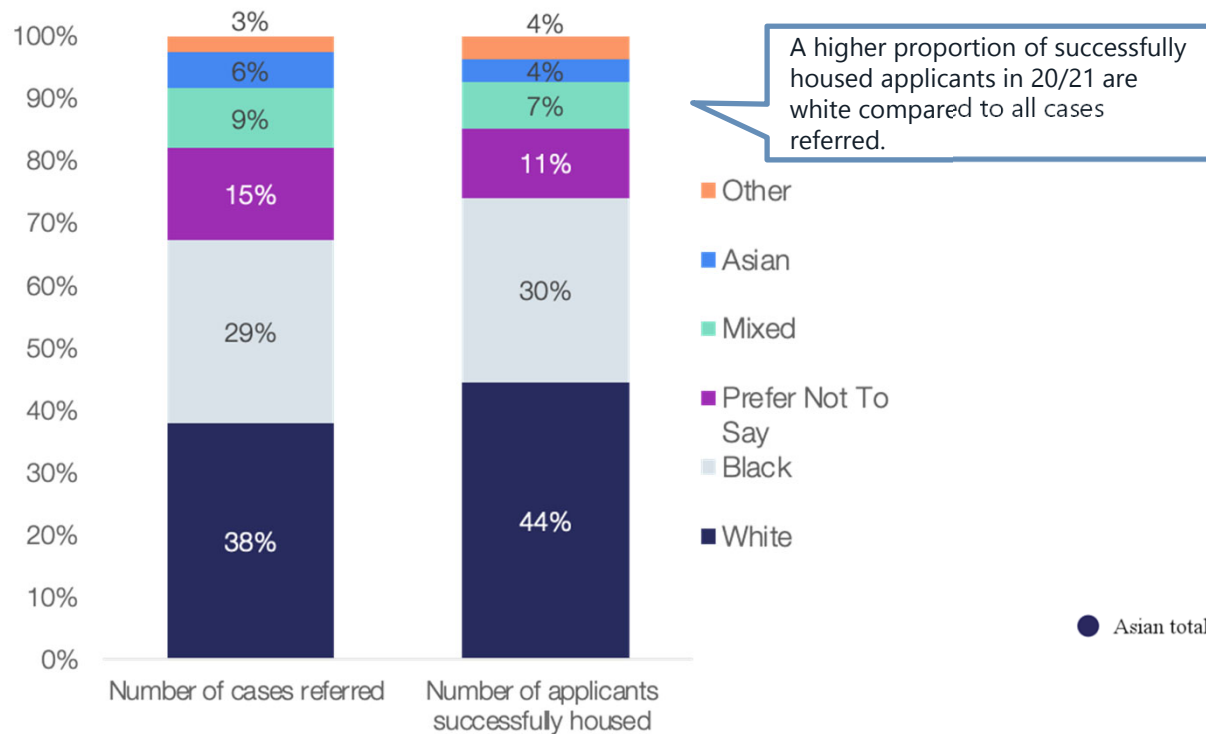


● Other ● Arab ● Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller
● Asian ● Black ● Mixed ● White

Overall, ethnic minorities were overrepresented as victims of domestic abuse when compared with general population figures. However, a disproportionate number of those rough sleeping due to domestic abuse were white.

DEMAND BY ETHNICITY

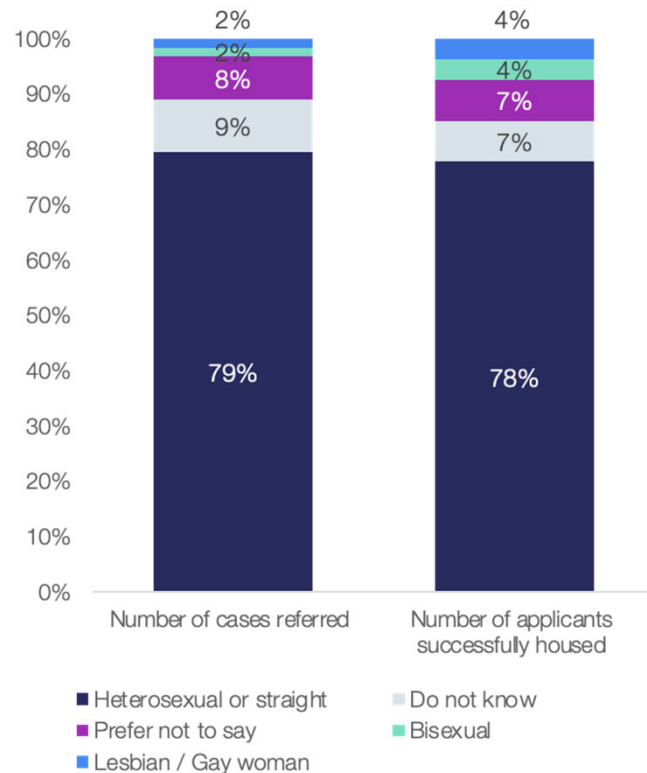
Ethnic minority victims/survivors are less likely to be placed in general refuge than white victims/survivors. They are more likely to be placed in specialist refuge, but specialist refuge has far less provision overall.



DEMAND BY SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The vast majority of victims/survivors of domestic abuse and those accessing specialist refuge provision identified as heterosexual. However, those identifying as Bisexual, or Lesbian were more likely to be placed in specialist refuge compared with general refuge.

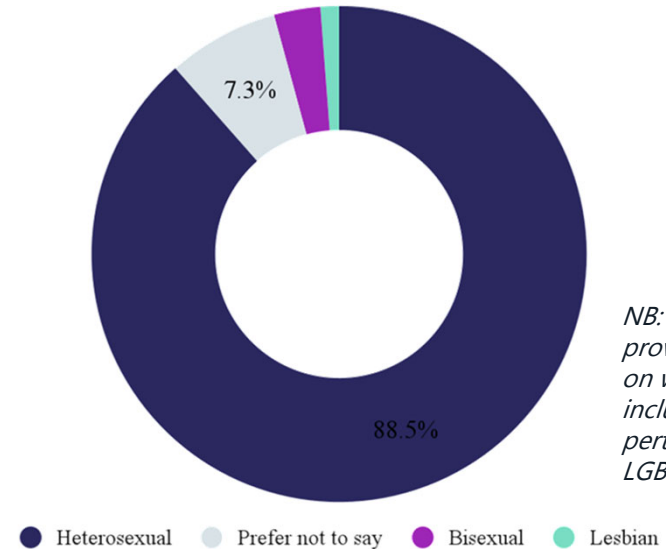
MARAC



SafeLives data shows that 2.1% of cases heard at MARAC related to LGBTIQ+ victims.

An NSPCC report (Barter et al., 2009) found that amongst 13-17 year olds, having a same sex partner increased the risk of experiencing domestic abuse.

Specialist provision by sexual orientation 20/21

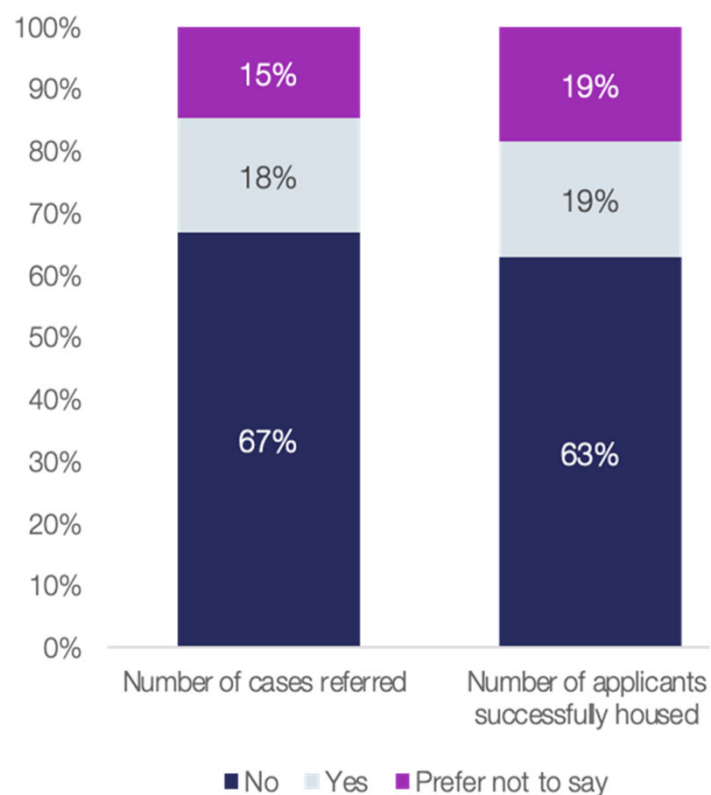


NB: This specialist provision focuses only on women. This does include any data pertaining to male LGBTIQ+ victims.

Whilst a small proportion of women placed in specialist refuge identified as LGBTIQ+, **this proportion is higher than those placed in general refuge by Women's Aid** - fewer than 10 of the 997 women placed in refuge via Women's Aid identified as Lesbian or Bisexual.

DEMAND BY DISABILITY

Whilst the overall proportion of domestic abuse victims/survivors with a disability is relatively low, people with a disability are disproportionately more likely to become victims/survivors.



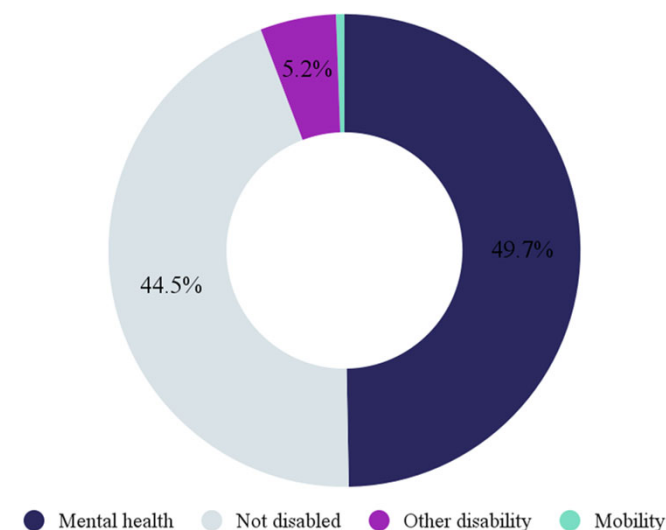
SafeLives data shows that 11.9% of cases heard at MARAC involved victims with disabilities.

The CSEW (19/20) reported that women and men with a long-standing illness or disability were **more than twice as likely to experience some form of domestic abuse (11.8%)** than their counterparts with no long-standing illness or disability (4.6%).

Amongst women, this figure is higher with 14.7% of female victims of domestic abuse reporting at least one disability.

There are a **higher percentage of victims and survivors with a disability represented in CSEW and PRC figures compared with those being placed in refuge.** This is possibly indicative of a lack of appropriate provision for those with disabilities.

Specialist provision by disability 20/21



INCOME

Victims/survivors are disproportionately represented in low-income households and in areas with high IMD scores.

According to PRC 20/21 data, there is a **strong correlation (0.74)** between the average Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score for each London ward and the volume of domestic abuse offences recorded in that area by the Metropolitan Police in 20/21.

Domestic abuse **offences were 3.4x more likely to take place in the highest IMD scoring London ward**, compared with the lowest scoring grouping.

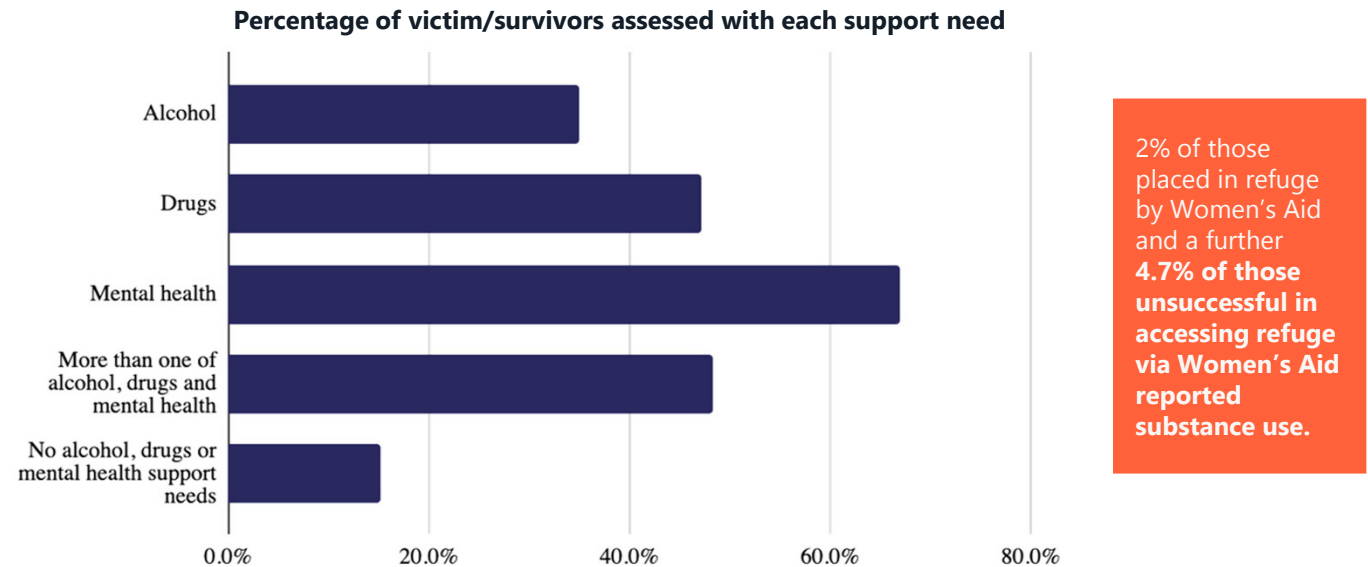
This is corroborated by data from the CSEW in 19/20, which highlighted that **more than twice as many women in the lowest income bracket (less than £10,400 per annum) recalled an experience of domestic abuse (11.8%)** compared with those in the highest household income bracket (£52,000 per annum) (5.4%).

None of the refuges collect income-related data.

Sources: Evidence & Insight; CHAIN; RTS

MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Victims/survivors reported a disproportionately high level of mental health concerns and substance use. Victim/survivors with these support needs were less likely to be placed in refuge.

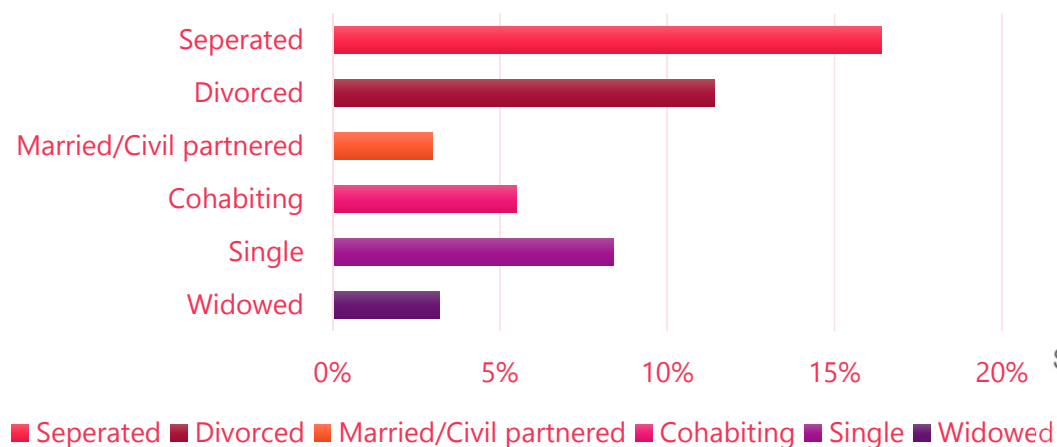


126 (12.6%) of those placed in refuge via Women's Aid and a further 193 (16.6%) of those unsuccessful in accessing refuge via Women's Aid reported mental health as a support need.

DEMAND BY MARTIAL STATUS AND CHILDREN

The majority of victims/survivors had children living with them at the time they were abused. The most likely group of victims/survivors to be placed in refuge or moved homes were single female parents.

Adult victim/survivors of domestic abuse by marital status (PRC)

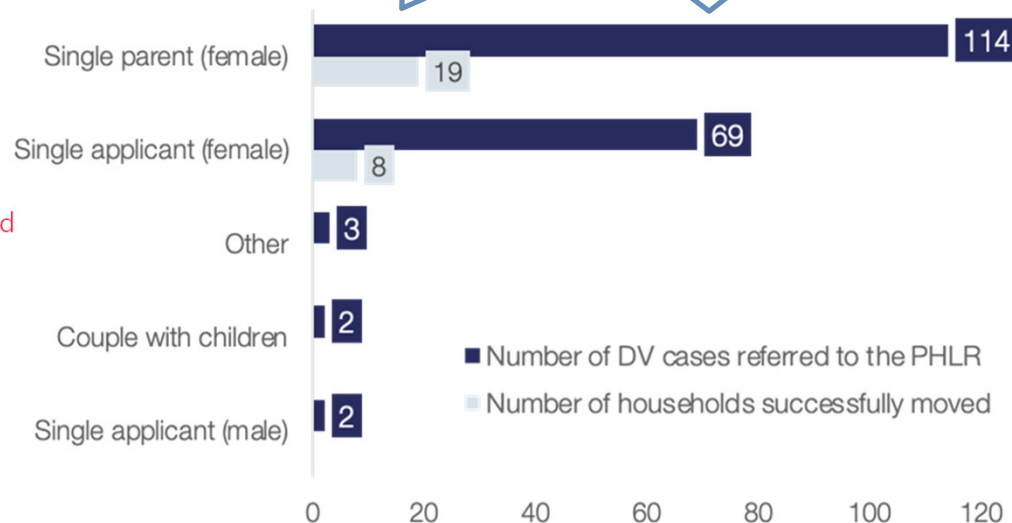


This PRC 20/21 data **may** reflect that fact that those who have separated from their partners may be more willing to report their experience of domestic abuse to the Police.

SafeLives data highlighted that **64% of victims and survivors reported there were children under the age of 18 in the house whilst the abuse happened.**

Single female parent households accounted for 60% (n=114) of all the DV cases that were referred to the PLHR in 20/21. For households successfully moved, they accounted for 70% (n=19).

None of the referred cases where the household consisted of a couple with children were accepted onto the scheme. In contrast, 2 of the 'Other' households and one of the single male applicants were accepted and are on the waiting list to be housed.



4.2

PROVISION

PROVISION IN LONDON

Refuge provision in London is higher than anywhere else in England and Wales. Whilst refuge space meets the Council of Europe's minimum recommendation, this does not account for movement into London and provision is not sufficient in meeting current demand.

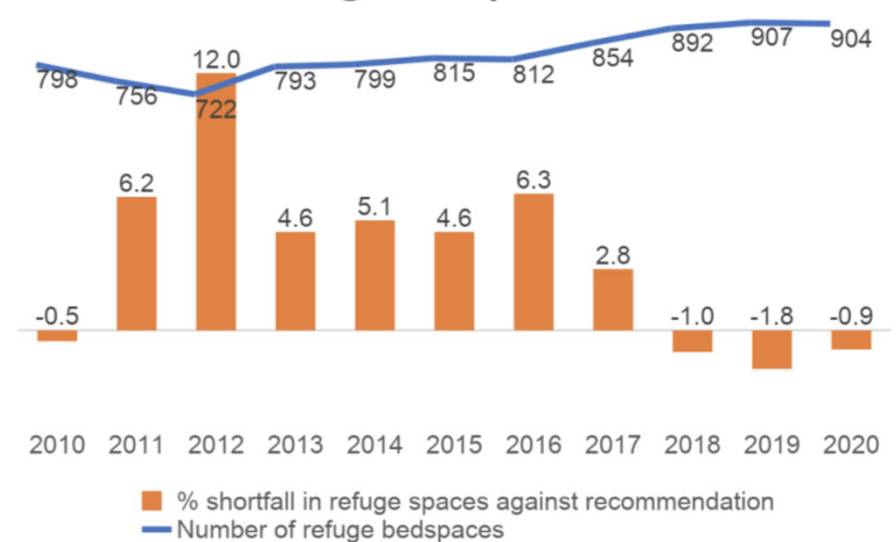
Routes to Support data cannot give us an accurate picture of demand but we do know 997 women were placed in refuge in 20/21. A further 1,164 were unsuccessful in accessing refuge.

In quarter three 20/21, 297 women were placed in refuge in London. A further 595 referrals were recorded. This suggests that demand is substantially greater than the number of women who are successfully placed in refuge.

55.7% (15) of 27 surveyed providers provided refuge. Only four provided specialist safe accommodation, whilst three ran sanctuary schemes. However, 81.5% (22) provided some kind of specialist service.

Indicates there is 2x demand as supply

London refuge bedspaces over time



The deficit figures here demonstrate that there is no shortfall in London compared with recommended provision. London is the only region in England and Wales without a shortfall (ONS).

This is corroborated by Women's Aid, who recognise that refuge space per 100,000 is higher in London than anywhere else in England. Despite this, demand for refuge space in London exceeds capacity.

PROVISION BY RISK LEVEL

Provision for victims/survivors not considered 'high risk' is in shorter supply. This may lead to minimal opportunities for early intervention, whereby victims/survivors can only receive support when their experience of domestic abuse escalates to 'high risk'.

Of the 27 surveyed providers



11 providers identified 1,283 service users as **'high risk'**



9 providers identified 902 service users as **'medium risk'**

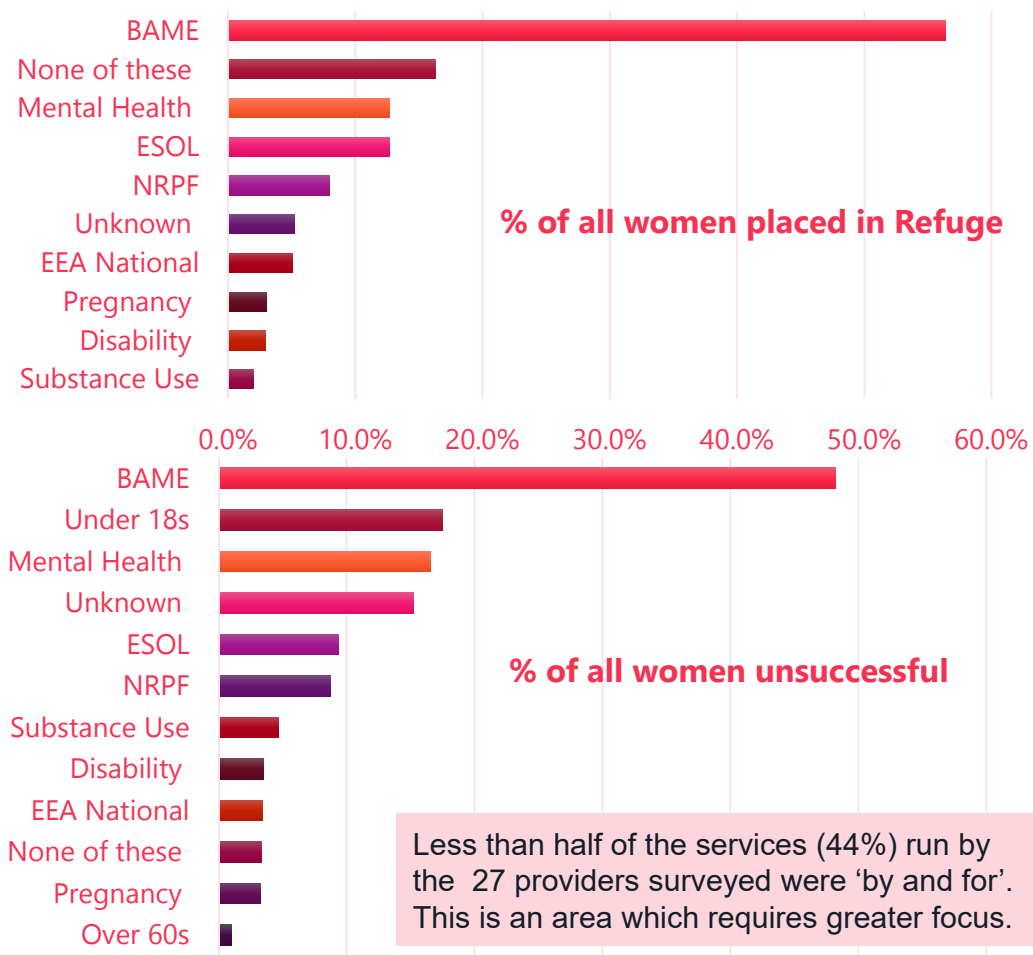


6 providers identified 307 service users as **'standard risk'**

Please note: the level of risk was determined by each provider according to their own definitions.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE SEEKING REFUGE

Particular cohorts are underrepresented in safe accommodation, including BAME victims/survivors and those under the age of 18.



The percentage of all refuge applications in London for BAME women is approximately 37%. However, **BAME** women make up a higher proportion of those placed in refuge and those unsuccessful in accessing refuge. This suggests there is a disproportionate demand from this group.

Women's Aid (2021) note this group are likely to experience additional barriers, multiple needs and fewer resources which may partly explain why more BAME women are seeking refuge.

In 20/21, fewer than 10 women **under the age of 18** were successfully placed in refuge but more than 17.5% of applications were unsuccessful (approximately 174). This indicates a particular gap in provision.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE SEEKING REFUGE

Victim/survivors with substance misuse issues, mental health support needs and disabilities are among the cohorts facing the largest barriers accessing safe accommodation. Improved provision and access is required for these cohorts.

In 20/21 women with **substance misuse issues** accounted for 2% of all women placed but 4.7% of unsuccessful referrals. This disparity in proportion suggests there is also a particular gap in refuge suitable for those with substance misuse issues.

3.3% (34) of new users of specialist refuge and support provision demonstrated a reduced use of harmful substances. Similarly, 6.4% (66) of new users of specialist refuge and support provision demonstrated an increased understanding and **stabilisation in their mental health**. These relatively low percentages may reflect a lack of provision available for specific needs within specialist refuges.

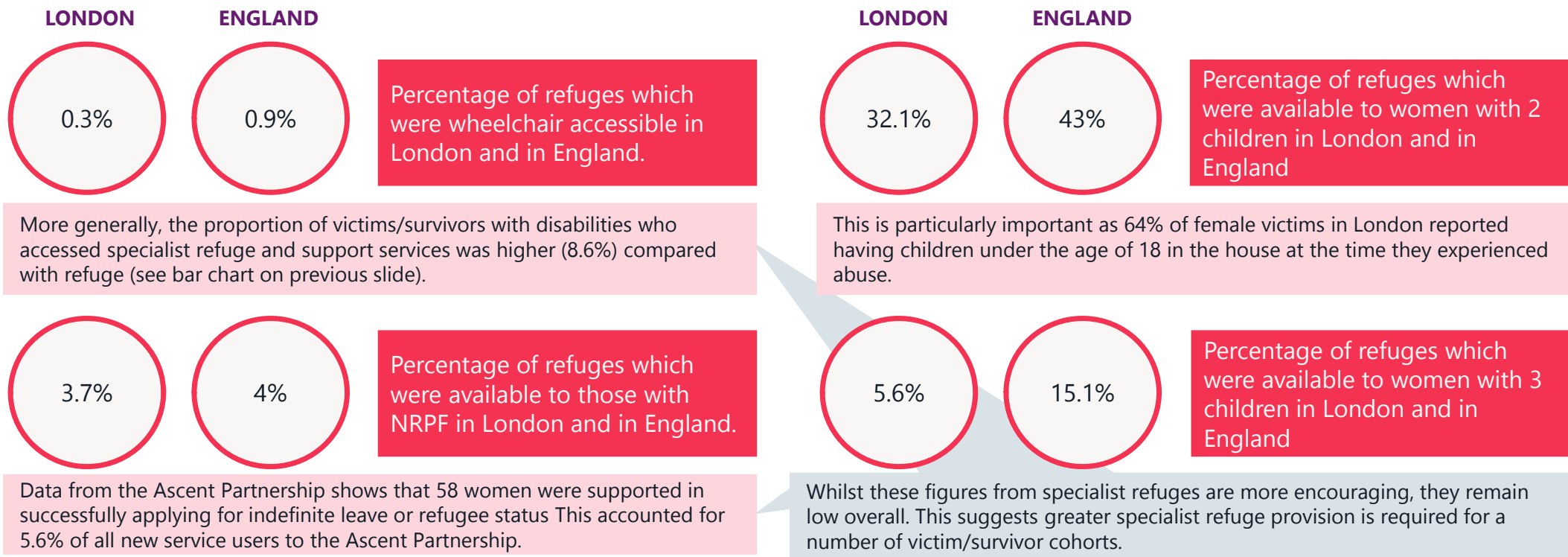
The No Woman Turned Away (NWTa) project illustrates how **women from the most marginalised groups in society**, with characteristics commonly associated with inadequate provision within wider domestic abuse services, **face the largest barriers accessing safe accommodation and support**. Funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and delivered by Women's Aid, NWTa uses a team of specialist caseworkers to support women who would otherwise struggle to find a refuge space. In 2020, the most common characteristics of women supported by the project were: women with **mental health support needs, BAME women and disabled women**.

Like other marginalised groups, **disabled women face barriers in accessing safe accommodation and support**. This stems from the fact that very few refuges have the services or facilities to accommodate those with physical or learning disabilities. A 2016 report from Women's aid shows that **only 4% of refuges provide any level of specialist support for women with learning difficulties**, and **under one third have full wheelchair access** throughout the refuge. Moreover, few services can meet the broader needs of disabled victims/survivors, as they lack staff that are trained in impairment-specific knowledge or understand the specific ways in which disabled victims/survivors experience domestic abuse.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE SEEKING REFUGE

There are also gaps in provision for women with children, victims/survivors with NRPF, and those who require wheelchair access. An uplift in Safe Accommodation that can accommodate victims/survivors from these cohorts is key.

Whilst gaps in provision for these groups are a national issue, data shows that it is more pronounced in London as the percentage of refuges that can accommodate women with mobility issues, those with NRPF and those with 2+ children is lower. This is important in the context of broader victimisation: we know that some of these victim/survivor groups are disproportionately more likely to experience domestic abuse.



PROVISION BY LOCAL AUTHORITY

Increasing refuge bed space in all boroughs across London is a crucial component of improving access to safe accommodation. Any uplift in provision should ensure an equal distribution across all London boroughs to ensure women have greater freedom to access refuge in an area outside where they currently reside.

10 local authorities that placed the highest number of women in 20/21

Westminster	66
Hackney	59
Lambeth	55
Bexley	52
Tower Hamlets	51
Kensington & Chelsea	48
Islington	45
Hounslow	42
Ealing	42
Croydon	42

Local authorities with the highest number of beds in Q4 20/21*

Newham	60
Westminster	59
Lambeth	52
Kensington & Chelsea	49
Hackney	48
Bromley	42
Waltham Forest	42
Lewisham	40
Islington	39
Croydon	34

There's correlation between the number of successful placements and the number of beds, as expected.

6 of the 10 local authorities placing the highest number of women in 20/21 are amongst the 10 local authorities with the highest number of beds.

Tower Hamlets, Bexley & Hounslow also have a higher than average number of beds (29).

MOVE-ON PROVISION

Consistent move-on provision is required to improve turnover rates and reduce length of stay at refuges and other emergency accommodation. This is crucial for managing demand in the system.

The local authorities with a higher rate of turnover in their beds were able to place more women than those with a lower turnover rate. This suggests that ensuring women have sufficient move-on accommodation is key in ensuring more women have access to refuge.

1.14
per
year

Average number of placements per bed* in 20/21 across all local authorities

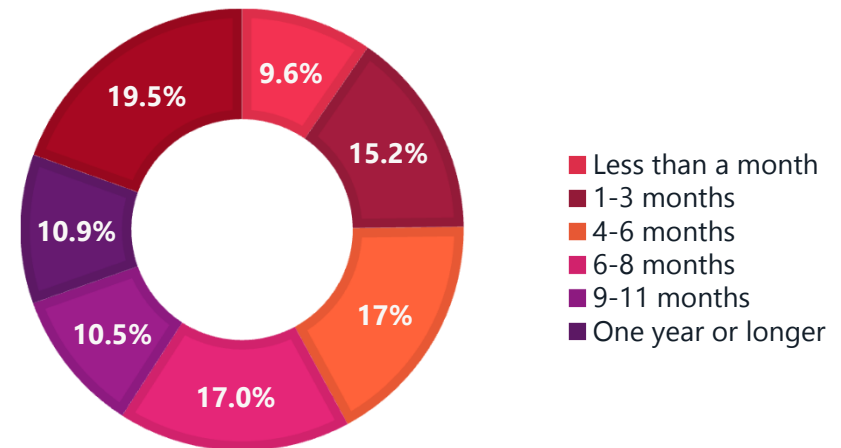
1.29
per
year

Average number of placements per bed in 20/21 across 10 local authorities with the highest number of refuge placements

1.09
per
year

Average number of placements per bed in 20/21 across 10 local authorities with the lowest number of refuge placements

Length of stay for women who left London refuges in 20/21



42.2% of women stay for up to six months with almost as many (38%) staying for longer than six months.

As part of the quantitative provider survey, 12 providers reported an average length of stay in Refuge or Safe Accommodation between 30 and 534 days. There was an average across the 12 providers of 206 days.

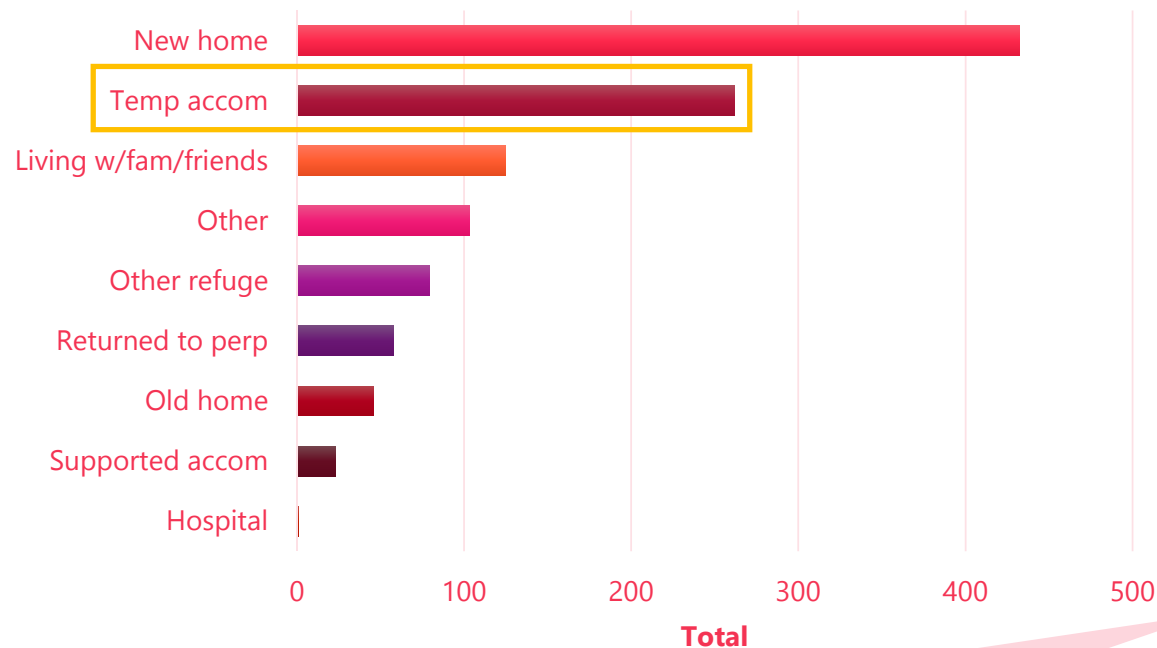
**Average number of placements per bed - worked out dividing number of placements in each local authority (or all local authorities added together) and divided by the number of beds available in each borough (or across all local authorities added together)*

Sources: RTS; Quantitative provider survey

MOVE-ON PROVISION

However, there is a significant shortfall in appropriate move-on provision for victim/survivors leaving refuge and other emergency accommodation. Failure to support victim/survivors at this stage can undermine progress made on recovery to date.

Outcomes for women leaving London refuges



Less than half of the women leaving refuge went onto independent accommodation in FY 20/21 (432 women)

Almost a quarter of women (262) went onto temporary accommodation and a further 10% onto live with family or friends (125). From qualitative engagement, unsuitability of temporary accommodation significantly increases the risk of victim/survivors returning to the perpetrator.

Very few women went onto other refuges. This includes those moving onto standard refuges (5.3%) and those moving on to refuges with specialist support services (0.4%).

58 women returned to the perpetrator (5.1%).

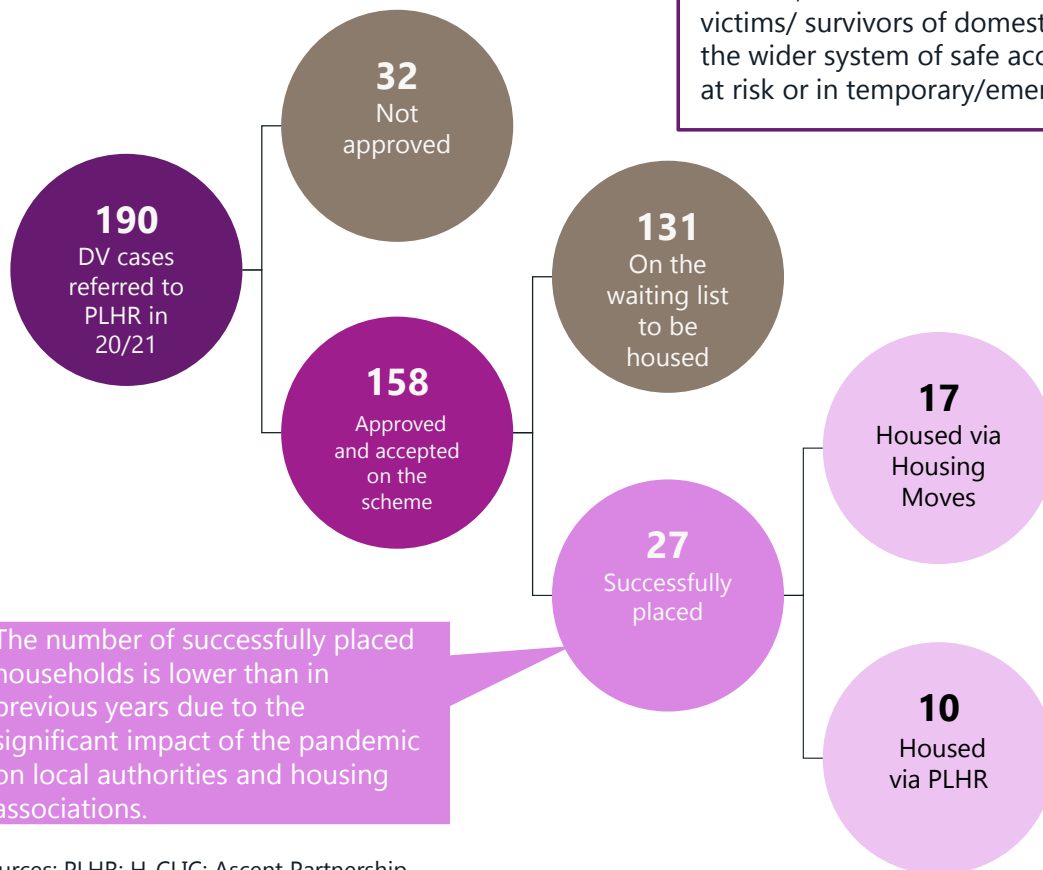
This means that where standard refuges do not meet the needs of victim/survivors, there are rarely cases of victim/survivors subsequently moving to specialist refuge.

MOVE-ON PROVISION

Similarly, PLHR data highlights the insufficient stock of housing in London to provide long-term safe accommodation to victims/survivors fleeing domestic abuse.

PLHR 2020/21 flow

2020/21 data from the PLHR shows that **only 27 households fleeing domestic abuse were successfully re-housed**, with 131 households on the waiting list. This indicates a lack of social housing in London providing victims/ survivors of domestic abuse with long-term safe accommodation. This is important to consider within the wider system of safe accommodation. A lack of move-on provision means that victims/ survivors stay longer at risk or in temporary/emergency accommodation.



H-CLIC data shows that 750 households owed a homelessness prevention, relief or main duty, out of 49,420, listed refuge as their accommodation at the time of application in 2020/21. This amounted to **1.5% of all households**.

Only **4 referral pathways** were agreed between specialist refuge and support organisations, and registered social landlords and other housing providers.

Only 3.3% of all new users of specialist refuge or support services were either:

1. **Prevented from unnecessary refuge** admissions through support to alternative housing options that enable them to stay safe
- OR
2. Provided with support because **the specific refuge provision they required was not available**.

5

ENGAGEMENT

VICTIM/SURVIVOR ENGAGEMENT

To keep the victim/survivor's voice central to this research, individual interviews were held to understand their unique journeys.

These discussions helped to inform how the greater system is setup to provide support as well as identify opportunities for improved victim/survivor experiences.

Four volunteer interviewees were identified and approached by their service providers.

Selection of suitable candidates involved:

- Approaching a range of providers to identify victim/survivors with different experiences, and
- Identifying candidates who were comfortable discussing their experience and at low risk of re-traumatisation.

In the time available, we were not able to interview a male victim/survivor, a disabled victim/survivor, a child victim/survivor or an LGBTIQ+ victim/survivor.

Gate One and Crest then coordinated individual virtual/telephone sessions, each scheduled for 1 hour, with the option to have their support provider/advocate present. One of the interviews involved an interpreter.

Ahead of the session, volunteers received an overview of the needs assessment and the purpose of the interview. Interview questions focused in 2 core areas:

- **Procedural journey** - Steps taken, people/organisations engaged, and general timeframes
- **How that journey felt** - What worked and what could have been better.

The following slides present a summary of the key themes raised through the interviews and an overview of each victim/survivor experience.

2 refuge, 1 temporary accommodation, 1 at home



3 mothers, 1 young woman without a child



1 'no recourse to public funds'



3 BME non-British, 1 white British



VICTIM/SURVIVOR ENGAGEMENT: SUMMARY OF THEMES & FEEDBACK

Ten key themes emerged from the victim/survivor interviews:

1. Lack of awareness of the support available (see Finding 5)
2. Lack of support for children as victims/survivors of domestic abuse (see Finding 3)
3. Importance of language support and cultural considerations (see Finding 3)
4. Use of temporary accommodation instead of safe accommodation (see Finding 4)
5. Importance of accommodation in relation to family court proceedings (see Finding 2)
6. Limited value of sanctuary schemes in relation to joint tenancies (see Finding 2)
7. Quality of refuge accommodation and of accommodation based support (see Finding 3)
8. Availability and suitability of move-on accommodation damaging recovery (see Finding 2)
9. Lack of transition support into move-on accommodation damaging recovery (see Finding 2)
10. Additional trauma introduced for those with NRPF (see Finding 2)

Victim/survivor feedback largely revolved around challenges in securing a placement, the quality of accommodation-based support (particularly regarding specific needs such as housing support, legal support or cultural/language support) and of how **some experiences in safe accommodation exacerbated their trauma**.

Throughout most conversations, there was a clear sense of victim/survivors **feeling helpless and often isolated**. Victim/survivor feedback on safe accommodation was mixed. Prospects for/experience of move-on accommodation were consistently negative, with some victim/survivors explaining that it had damaged their mental health.

KEY FOR VICTIM/SURVIVOR EXPERIENCE

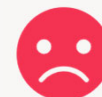
Met victim/survivor needs



Neutral



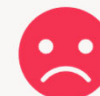
Did not meet victim/survivor needs



VICTIM/SURVIVOR 1 - FEMALE

KEY FEATURES: COERCIVE CONTROL / JOINT TENANCY / FAMILY COURT PROCEEDINGS / SANCTUARY SCHEMES / CHILD VICTIMS/SURVIVORS

The victim/survivor historically experienced domestic abuse (3-4 years ago) by a previous partner and resided in 5 different refuges with her two older children during that period. She was experiencing coercive control by the father of her two younger children. They hold a joint tenancy through a housing association and are currently in the family court process to agree access to their children (the perpetrator currently has custody after removing them from the family home).



REFERRAL	ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORT	MOVE-ON / NEXT STEPS
Was receiving talking therapy through Solace (in relation to her previous experiences) at a point where both the ambulance crew and her GP identified her relationship as abusive.	<p>Did not want to move into a refuge due to the need to maintain a stable family home for her children (particularly during the ongoing family court proceedings) and due to previous refuge experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"They are going to find you anyway - I don't want to runaway - I'm tired of living my life through someone else's nastiness - my house should be the one thing that I can have for myself".</i> <i>"There were no staff in the refuges outside of hours. At night time men would arrive to visit other woman which isn't safe."</i> <i>"At one refuge, I had to prove abuse and felt like was being interrogated. The only way to prove coercive control it is to let him do it more."</i> Pets are not allowed in refuges <i>"[My refuge experiences] made me want to stay in this abusive relationship."</i> <p>Joint tenancy means the perpetrator is legally allowed to enter the home. (There was at first a non molestation order in place which wasn't renewed due to the perpetrator's "good behaviour".)</p> <p>Solace provided remote support, including changing the locks on her home and installing dummy CCTV cameras outside – the victim/survivor wanted more home security equipment.</p> <p><i>"My children are not protected and they're in a very vulnerable state."</i></p>	<p>Following the conclusion of the family court proceedings, the housing association will make a decision on the future of the tenancy.</p> <p><i>"Not having any stability or security for myself is driving me mad. Who's looking after me?"</i></p> <p><i>"If I can't get a single tenancy, I'll be made homeless."</i></p> <p><i>"I'm a year on and he's still in control of my finances and home."</i></p>

WOMEN IN JOINT TENANCIES WHO DO NOT WANT TO LEAVE THEIR HOMES ARE NOT SUFFICIENTLY PROTECTED, DUE TO THE LEGAL ABILITY OF THE PERPETRATOR TO RETURN TO THEIR HOME. THIS IS MORE LIKELY TO OCCUR IN CASES OF COERCIVE CONTROL WHICH THIS VICTIM/SURVIVOR FELT WAS 'HARDER TO PROVE'.

VICTIM/SURVIVOR 2 - FEMALE

KEY FEATURES: TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION / FAMILY COURT PROCEEDINGS / CHILD VICTIM/SURVIVORS

The perpetrators were her husband and her husband's family. She has two children who are currently with the perpetrator, pending proceedings through family court.



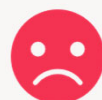
REFERRAL

She sought help from her doctor on 26th January 2021 through a phone appointment.

Her GP contacted a domestic abuse service, who called her the next day and took her details.

She then gave a statement to the Police and gave an interview to the Police.

She was referred to a by & for organisation who helped her get in touch with a solicitor to commence family court proceedings.



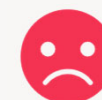
ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORT

Despite being referred to a refuge provider, she pursued temporary accommodation through a homeless project in London. It took her multiple requests to be accepted into temporary accommodation, until which she was living with her sister's family.

Her temporary accommodation consists of multiple tenants in a single house, although she has not come across any other tenants. She is receiving no wider support other than counselling at present and is suffering from isolation.

"I would like my own safe accommodation where I can bring my children, with a separate room. I'd like to improve my English. I'd like to enrol in college and learn to be independent and provide a future for my children. I've suffered a lot and just want to be happy."

"Everyone deserves to come home and be safe and be in a place where they feel comfortable and happy."



MOVE-ON / NEXT STEPS

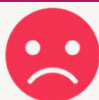
There is currently no view on when she will be able to leave temporary accommodation, nor what the next step will be.

ALTHOUGH REFERRED TO A BY & FOR ORGANISATION, THIS VICTIM/SURVIVOR DID NOT SEEM AWARE OF THE RANGE OF SUPPORT POTENTIALLY AVAILABLE TO HER AND WAS CONCERNED THAT THE UNSUITABILITY OF HER TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR CHILDREN WOULD AFFECT THE OUTCOME OF HER FAMILY COURT APPLICATION. HER NEED FOR SAFE ACCOMMODATION IS NOT BEING MET AT PRESENT.

VICTIM/SURVIVOR 3 - FEMALE

KEY FEATURES: ACCESSIBILITY OF SUPPORT / NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS / MOVE-ON ACCOMMODATION

The victim/survivor travelled to England with the perpetrator after experiencing 3-4 years abuse in her home country, on a student visa in September 2017 (NRPF). She has been living in refuge for 3 years.



REFERRAL

"GP asked if I was safe, but I didn't know why they were asking or what they would do with my notes. They should have let me know how they could help me. Many girls aren't even allowed to register with a GP [due to immigration status]."

Her friends encouraged her to go to the Police. The perpetrator was arrested and sent to prison for 8 months. He has since been released and returned to their home country. The Police provided her with a national helpline number.

"We go on and on with abuse because we don't know what our options are."

*"Girls should know more about their rights when they come to this country. When women go for their visa interview, they are on their own and could be given the information about their rights (their husbands cannot squash their visa etc). **Safe houses like these are hidden.**"*

Due to her status as NRPF, she was rejected by all refuges that she contacted. She had nowhere to live and ***"felt shame"***. She had financial challenges and was travelling across London with all her bags to seek refuge *"crying and begging"*. Each refuge referred her to another which in turn referred her on.

Her current refuge wouldn't accept her due to NRPF but after she explained her situation, they accepted her three weeks later when a space became available.

"Girls on a spouse visa would be given a place instantly. I've been through the same trauma but because of my student visa, I had weeks [of more trauma]."



ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORT

This victim/survivor has **resided in a by and for refuge for three years**, pending an outcome on her visa application.

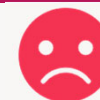
She is receiving financial support (including food), emotional and legal support (re her visa process) and has been supported to settle in and study dentistry.

*"I can see quite clearly that they don't have many resources to support us but it's been amazing. From the bottom of my heart, I will never forget [this place]. **Everyone abandoned me and that's when they accepted me.** This place has given me safety and stability. They got me a £3000 scholarship to study."*

*"We live in a house that is very old - we would like to live in a good house with more facilities - Repairs take too long - **we've been washing our clothes by hand for one year.**"*

"New girls are provided English food, but they would prefer to have money to buy their home food"

"It feels like family now - it's a very good platform for me to develop emotionally - I have key work sessions every week to check on me and if there are any issues they can help with - once a month there's a long conversation on independence"



MOVE-ON / NEXT STEPS

"Because of my visa situation, I'm stuck - I have progressed emotionally and mentally but I haven't progressed in life because of my visa issues."

"It's just [the refuge] who's looking after me otherwise I really have no place to go"

*"I have mental breakdowns, I have anxiety issues, I cannot study, work, drive, live another life. **I wasted 6 years of my life with this guy and now I'm here for 3 years and I don't know where my life is heading.**"*

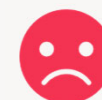
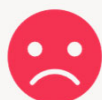
"[The refuge] ensures the girls are ready to live on their own."

GIRLS WHO HAVE NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS ARE IN MANY CASES RE-TRAUMATISED THROUGH THE LACK OF ACCESS TO SUITABLE SAFE ACCOMMODATION

VICTIM/SURVIVOR 4 - FEMALE

KEY FEATURES: LANGUAGE SUPPORT / MOVE-ON / FOLLOW ON SUPPORT

This victim/survivor spoke very little English when they were seeking safe accommodation. She had a 4 month old daughter and was on a temporary visa.



REFERRAL	ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORT	MOVE-ON / NEXT STEPS
<p>She was initially placed in temporary accommodation for a few days. Council referred her to Refuge for more support (facilitated by a social worker).</p> <p><i>"I was so scared I didn't know what refuge was - I thought there might be men there. I didn't know what women's rights were here – women don't know that there is money and support available."</i></p> <p>Her family recommended she go there because it would be safe.</p>	<p>She was placed into a refuge for 3.5 months before the perpetrator turned up at the refuge and she was moved to another.</p> <p>She was given a support worker. <i>"I experienced abuse from the support worker. She was very rude to me. I now understand that she shouldn't have done that."</i></p> <p>Shared accommodation increased the pressure to immediately clean up after yourself, which can be hard with children.</p> <p><i>"I was happy because I had my own room and my own space. When I ask for things, they provided them."</i></p> <p>A worker spoke to her in Hindi which allowed her to answer questions fully.</p> <p><i>"I now know I was only given 40% of the support that was available."</i> At the second refuge, she <i>"learned more about my rights."</i></p> <p>She did not have frequent access to translation support – <i>"I couldn't write emails to the housing officer which was very stressful – it caused me to be depressed. All the pressure was on me."</i></p> <p><i>"I needed support in looking after my child on my own [in refuge]."</i></p> <p><i>"Please improve the services - women are being more hurt. Services should be there to support them. Women need more help than they're being given."</i></p> <p>Refuges housed a mix of women which was challenging with a child.</p>	<p>4-5 months after joining the second refuge (7-9 months in refuge in total), she was offered social housing by the council.</p> <p>She rejected it due to it being too small for a child and on the first floor as she was living alone with a 1.5 year old. <i>"Do I leave my daughter downstairs or my shopping downstairs?"</i></p> <p>The second offer was in the same area as her ex-partner. <i>"I was told that if I didn't accept it, I would be given notice by the refuge and I would become homeless. I could never forget that conversation. I was so hurt. I spent all day crying - it was always hurt me. I had to accept it because I had no other choice."</i></p> <p><i>"Benefits were not enough for us. I had to borrow money from friends and family. I didn't know which bills to [prioritise]"</i></p> <p>The accommodation was not furnished and she had to buy everything herself. <i>"the flat was completely empty – not even a chair. I went 8 months without a sofa, carpets or a table".</i> The refuge applied for a support worker in the community to help with translation. There was a delay with this which created challenges for utilities bills and resulted in a late application for council tax which cost the victim/survivor £200.</p> <p><i>"Dealing with [family] court was very stressful"</i></p>

"IMPROVE SERVICES SO PEOPLE DON'T CONTINUE TO FEEL UNHAPPY IN REFUGE AND SUPPORT THEM WHEN THEY LEAVE SO THEY DON'T BECOME DEPRESSED."

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We interfaced with key stakeholders to better understand the profiles of the victims/survivors they see, who is disproportionately impacted by the need for safe accommodation, the extent to which victim/survivor needs are met and ongoing gaps and opportunities.



13 Stakeholder
Meetings



2 Focus
Groups



Provider Survey



VAWG
Coordinator
Survey

Over 50 stakeholders were engaged in several ways including a provider survey, a VAWG coordinator survey, two focus groups (18 attendees), and 13 1:1 meetings. Focus groups were used to elaborate on specific insights and opportunities raised through 1:1 meetings.

Focus group questions focused in three main areas:

- What the mix of safe accommodation should look like across London
- What a more coordinated approach for London should look like in future
- How providers can be better supported to maintain sustainable quality services

PROVIDER SURVEY

Respondents

Asha
Ashiana
Bexley Women's Aid
Bromley & Croydon Women's Aid
DePaul
EACH
Galop
Havering Women's Aid
Hestia
Hounslow Domestic & Sexual Violence
IKWRO
Jewish Women's Aid
LAWA
Look Ahead
Mungos
NIA Ending Violence
Refuge
Solace
Southall Black Sisters
Standing Together
VAWG Consortium
Victim Support

Provider Questions:

1. Please note any observations regarding the movement of victims/survivors into and/or across London to escape abuse (including any socioeconomic or demographic observations) , and how this should affect the commissioning of safe accommodation.
2. Do you believe the need for safe accommodation to be more or less prevalent within any particular demographic group?
3. Are there are particular demographics, protected characteristics or socio-economic groups who you believe are likely to under-report their need for support?
4. How effective is existing wrap-around service provision?
5. How effective is existing move-on service provision and how effective is the relationship between safe accommodation providers and the local authority, regarding move-on?
6. Please use this space to note findings from referrals and barriers e.g. What gaps have you identified? Do you have enough support to accommodate the numbers of referrals now and in the future? Are the right types of services in place with the right types of support, to meet demand?
7. Please use this space to note any thoughts on opportunities for innovation to better meet the needs of victims/survivors e.g. What could be commissioned to ensure that more referrals are accepted and overcome barriers that have existed previously? How can more victims/survivors have access to the support they need?
8. Please note any thoughts relating to housing solutions for perpetrators, which may better enable victim safety and recovery.

For a summary of responses, please refer to the Appendix.

VAWG COORDINATOR SURVEY

Respondents

Bexley	Ealing
Brent	Enfield
Camden	Greenwich
Harrow	Hackney
Havering	Hammersmith &
Hounslow	Fulham
Kingston	Haringey
Lambeth	Islington
Newham	Lewisham
Tower Hamlets	Merton
Richmond &	RKBC
Wandsworth	Redbridge
Croydon	Sutton
Ealing	Waltham Forest

VAWG Coordinator Questions:

1. Please note any observations regarding the movement of victims/survivors into and/or across London to escape abuse (including any socioeconomic or demographic observations), and how this should affect the commissioning of safe accommodation
2. How effective is existing wrap-around service provision?
3. How effective is existing move-on service provision and how effective is the relationship between safe accommodation providers and the local authority, regarding move-on?
4. Please use this space to note findings from referrals and barriers e.g. What gaps have you identified? Do you have enough support to accommodate the numbers of referrals now and in the future? Are the right types of services in place with the right types of support, to meet demand?
5. Please use this space to note any thoughts on opportunities for innovation to better meet the needs of victims/survivors e.g. What could be commissioned to make referrals more successful and overcome barriers that have existed previously? How can more victims/survivors have access to the support they need?
6. Please note any thoughts relating to housing solutions for perpetrators, which may better enable victim safety and recovery.

For a summary of responses, please refer to the Appendix.

6

KEY FINDINGS

GOING FORWARD, WE NEED A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF DEMAND, SUPPLY & FUNDING

STRATEGIC DATA SETS

The London safe accommodation system has good operational data sets that facilitate service provision on a day-to-day basis and decision making within organisation. These data sets do not come together to enable strategic oversight of delivery of the Domestic Abuse Strategy or implementation of the commissioning framework.

A coordinated and strategic approach to data collection and analysis will provide greater insight on performance, inform strategic decision making and support future iterative needs assessments. Such an approach should include standardisation of recording of protected characteristics, to allow for data integration and comparisons etc.

Recommendation: Pursue development of a strategic dataset across London, that will build a more coherent and clearer picture of demand and supply, aligned with the MHCLG needs assessment template, and incorporate this in commissioning requirements of providers.

DATA GAPS

Within the data that exists, there are some notable gaps in the existence and/or level of detail in data regarding to cohorts of victim/survivors who we know through qualitative engagement are likely to experience more barriers in accessing safe accommodation, including:

Male victims/survivors – We see high prevalence of reported male victims/survivors in PRC and CSEW data, as well as a high prevalence in the homelessness data. However, due to the non-existence of safe accommodation for male victim/survivors in London, Routes to Support does not capture any of their demand (victims/survivors cannot request something that doesn't exist). We therefore do not know to what extent the CJS and homelessness data is indicative of a safe accommodation need for this group of victim/survivors. Nor do we understand the nature of the domestic abuse that they experience, the relationships involved, the impact of wider protected characteristics and how they intersect with complex needs.

Child victims/survivors - The new duty sets out that children are now formally recognised as victim/survivors of domestic abuse themselves and should be afforded the same response and support as adult victim/survivors. Most operational data is currently adult based and provides little information on the level of demand from child victims/survivors, such as demographics, needs and the impacts on the models of safe accommodation made available in London. Adolescent needs should be fully understood to inform provision. A closer relationship between social care, education and safe accommodation services should enable the cross utilisation of data.

Victims/survivors with mental health issues – Although we understand from qualitative engagement that requirements for mental health support can act as a blocker for access to safe accommodation and the level of support available in safe accommodation is limited, operational data does not allow us to understand the nature of mental health needs for victim/survivors in London, and hence makes it more challenging to understand the scale and nature of support required for this group.

"There isn't a demand on male refuge space because you don't ask for something that doesn't exist. We are massively failing our male victims across the board."

- Provider

GOING FORWARD, WE NEED A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF DEMAND, SUPPLY & FUNDING

Victims/survivors aged 16-18 - There is high level evidence on unmet need for young women victims/survivors but without a detailed understanding on the nature of that need (for example, whether victim/survivors are living with perpetrators). There is added complexity regarding what is available for those aged between 16-18 and where the responsibilities for support for this age sub-group lie. In addition, there are challenges regarding the differences in access to benefits for this groups and how that is managed. A detailed assessment of this cohort should include the overlap with wider complex needs such as mental health and substance misuse to better understand the type of safe accommodation that are required.

Victims/survivors with disabilities – We understand from qualitative engagement that disabled victims/survivors are generally unable to access good quality support that meets their needs, as mainstream services struggle to make the necessary arrangements to ensure they are accommodated. Similarly to male victims/survivors, operational data does not provide us with sufficient insight on unmet demand for this cohort, due to the lack of appropriate accommodation for victims/survivors.

Temporary accommodation – Although temporary accommodation is not included in the scope of the Domestic Abuse Act, is it currently a critical part of understanding demand in London.

There are some specific challenges in the way in which data is captured across the system currently:

Domestic abuse Police data - We do not have a consistent breakdown of the nature of domestic abuse between CSEW and PRC data. Understanding the relationship between perpetrators and their victims/survivors will help us to understand the differences between these data sets and the demand we see for safe accommodation.

Unmet demand - Routes to Support only registers applications for vacant spaces in safe accommodation. Therefore, we do not have a view of unmet demand, where there were no spaces available or for which victims/survivors were deemed ineligible at first point of contact.

Placements vs placement applications - Routes to Support currently records placement applications for which there may be multiple for a single victim/survivor. Without having this data collated for individuals, it is not possible to compare it to other data sets and does not enable us to understand the journeys of victims/survivors.

Recommendation: Improve data collection in relation to cohorts of victims/survivors known to experience barriers in accessing safe accommodation, to support ongoing monitoring and evaluation of demand and provision, as well as more information on domestic abuse victim/survivors in temporary accommodation.

GOING FORWARD, WE NEED A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF DEMAND, SUPPLY & FUNDING

SANCTUARY SCHEMES

Limited data is available on the provision or effectiveness in the Sanctuary schemes in London, alongside an absence of information of how the funding now works for sanctuary and what level of investment is now made. A deep dive needs to map funding, understand effectiveness and make recommendations as to how and where sanctuary schemes fit into the overall safe accommodation provision and referral system in London.

Recommendation: Conduct further analysis into sanctuary to understanding funding and effectiveness, and recommend how sanctuary should feature in safe accommodation provision across London.

FUNDING AND COMMISSIONING LANDSCAPE

The new duty did not require a Tier 1 view of funding and commissioning to cover important aspects pan London, such as:

- where money is being spent on safe accommodation
- where that funding has come from
- the timescales for existing funding and conditions
- proportions of local authorities' budgets being spent on provision
- the proportion of MOPAC commissioning
- the scale of charitable donations and grants funding safe accommodation

Without this, it is more challenging to understand how to ensure that existing provision is sustainable, prior to further investment. In particular, there is a risk that provision that has previously been funded through charitable donations and grants may come under threat due to the perception of new government funding.

Recommendation: Develop a consolidated understanding of funding and commissioning of services across London, including scale of commissioning, the content of commissioned contracts and use of charitable/grant funding in the sector.

LIMITATIONS OF ACCOMMODATION INCREASE THE RISK OF VICTIM/SURVIVORS RETURNING TO THE PERPETRATOR OR EXPERIENCING NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS

EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

There is not a comprehensive or well-defined provision of emergency accommodation for those who need a place of safety pending access to more medium-term accommodation. This disproportionality affects victims/survivors with no recourse to public funds, particularly as local authorities do not have an obligation to house them. The period between seeking support and being given safe accommodation is a key point of vulnerability for victim/survivors and poor levels of support at this stage can lead to further trauma for victims/survivors. It is important that emergency accommodation is suitable for needs of victims/survivors (for example not mixed gender) (see slides 36-38). In the worst cases, this period of homelessness leads to victim/survivors returning to the perpetrator.

Recommendation: Ensure availability of emergency accommodation for high-risk cases (including NRPF) where immediate access to refuge or other medium-term accommodation isn't available.

REFUGE / SPECIALIST SAFE / DISPERSED

The provision of safe accommodation services across London does not meet the current level of demand (see slide 20). Provision within Boroughs is largely dependent on local funding which has introduced a postcode lottery effect for victim/survivors. More than 2000 women in London accessed refuge in 20/21. Estimates suggest up to double the amount of women were unable to access refuge (based on Q3 data) (see slide 20). Increasing refuge bed space in all boroughs across London is a crucial component of improving access to safe accommodation. Ensuring an equal uplift in provision across all London boroughs will ensure women have greater freedom to access refuge in an area other than where they currently reside.

"Refuge": Quantitative analysis indicates that there isn't enough refuge provision to meet demand. Refuge in London is currently focussed on communal living. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis indicates barriers to access for the following groups:

- **Young women (16-24)** – Although is potential the case that women under the age of 18 may be accommodated in supported accommodation for children, more qualitative and quantitative data indicate a lack of accessibility for young women. Providing the required level of support to this age group can have a preventative effect regarding worsening of abuse and re-victimisation later in life (see slide 36).

"We had a young woman fleeing her parents - we couldn't accommodate her because she was underage so we had to send her to the police."

- Provider

LIMITATIONS OF ACCOMMODATION INCREASE THE RISK OF VICTIM/SURVIVORS RETURNING TO THE PERPETRATOR OR EXPERIENCING NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS

- **Teenage male children of victim/survivors** – It is more challenging for providers to accommodate older male victim/survivors due to the anxieties and vulnerabilities of other residents. As we consider children as victims/survivors in their own right going forward, this group need a particularly focus as a key prevention initiative, both for the risk of continued trauma for the victim/survivor and any risks for the victim/survivor to become a perpetrator in future.
- **Families with 2+ children** – The vast majority of victims/survivors had children living with them at the time they were abused. London has a smaller proportion of safe accommodation placements for families of 2+ children than the average for England & Wales and this is known to be a key barrier for accessing safe accommodation in London. For victims/survivors without primary custody of their children, this can present a further challenge in supporting their case of custody or access to their children. Communal refuges are reported to be a particularly challenging environment for victims/survivors to maintain family life and live largely independently (see slide 38).
- **BAME victim/survivors** - Ethnic minorities are more likely to experience domestic abuse than their white counterparts but are less likely to be placed in refuge than white victims/survivors. Ethnic minority victims/survivors are more likely to be placed in specialist refuge but specialist refuge has far less provision overall. (see slide 36). As research by Imkaan shows, BAME women fleeing domestic violence can struggle to find support that meets their specific needs. For example, many mainstream providers lack language and translation services, which is crucial for BAME women who may not speak English. More broadly, mainstream services lack an understanding of the specific ways in which BAME women experience abuse, the contexts in which they experience it, and the wider structural factors that shape violence in their lives (poverty, racism and sexism). Whilst specialist providers have the knowledge and expertise to bridge these gaps and provide support that can meet the needs of BAME women, they often suffer from precarious funding arrangements. This can limit the number of women that they are able to support.
- **Victims/survivors with NRPF** – There are a range of reasons why a victim/survivor may have no resource to public funds. Through this assessment, most cases discussed related to victims/survivors with insecure immigration status (such as a student visa). Provision for NRPF victims/survivors is excluded from the majority of commissioning in London. This is in many cases resulting in victims/survivors having to approach large numbers of providers across London for support, repeatedly requesting a place. The comparatively small number of NRPF placements are often funded through internal provider funds or charitable donations/grants. The level of demand evidenced through the Mayoral emergency response fund indicates a higher level of demand for NRPF support that is shown through Routes to Support. Engagement with victims/survivors indicated that this lack of access to support can lead to further trauma for victims/survivors (see slide 38).

LIMITATIONS OF ACCOMMODATION INCREASE THE RISK OF VICTIM/SURVIVORS RETURNING TO THE PERPETRATOR OR EXPERIENCING NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS

- Disabled victims/survivors** - Whilst the overall proportion of domestic abuse victims/survivors with a disability is relatively low, those with a disability are disproportionately more likely to be victims/survivors. There is a dearth of accommodation available for wheelchair users and others with limited mobility and a lack of suitable accommodation for deaf victims/survivors. Specialist support for disabled women is therefore required to be both physically accessible and have specialist staff trained in impairment-specific knowledge, who have an understanding of the types of abuse that women may have experienced. Disabled women may require special transportation, communication aides, adapted accommodation and other types of services to address their needs which may not be available in a refuge (Chang et al., 2004). Disabled women may also be unable to use public transport and potentially have no means of travelling to the refuge (see slides 37-38).
- LGBTIQ+ victims/survivors** – There is currently no commissioned provision in London for LGTBIQ+ victims/survivors, who typically require specialist support. This is a particular challenge for transgender victim/survivors as there is no policy or approach across London with regard to the eligibility of transgender victims/survivors for places in women's refuge (see slide 29).
- Victims/survivors with mental health and substance misuse support needs** - Victims/survivors reported a disproportionately high level of mental health concerns and substance misuse. As outlined in the quantitative analysis, both of these support needs are key barriers for accessibility to safe accommodation. (see slides 31 and 37). There are a number of reasons why women with high support needs relating to mental health and substance misuse struggle to find a suitable refuge space. One reason is because service providers lack the resources and funding to accommodate women with high support needs. Indeed, a survey by Women's Aid shows that, in 2016, less than one in four refuges offered specialist in-house mental health support and only one in ten had a specialist drug worker. Service providers have also stated, in a recent report by the Greater London Authority (GLA), that 24/7 support was the most effective way of supporting women with high support needs, but often the funding for this was not available. Beyond these funding constraints, service providers reported that risk management issues often arise from women with high support needs. For example, in the presence of children or other residents in shared spaces, it can be unsafe to accommodate victim/survivors with significant mental health or substance misuse issues. These victims/survivors may be refused a refuge space.

"There are very few purpose built properties for victim/survivors with specialist physical needs, because it's very hard to provide this in the bounds of what is commissioned."

- Provider

LIMITATIONS OF ACCOMMODATION INCREASE THE RISK OF VICTIM/SURVIVORS RETURNING TO THE PERPETRATOR OR EXPERIENCING NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS

“Specialist safe”: Qualitative engagement identified positive feedback on the levels of support provided by specialist safe accommodation, particularly in relation to providing culturally sensitive support and language support. Commissioners and services users generally agree that ‘by and for’ services are better suited to meet the needs of specific communities, compared to generic ‘one size fits all’ services. This is because organisations working in the ‘by and for’ sector have long histories of supporting their communities and have thus developed unparalleled expertise. BAME services, in particular, have developed an understanding of the types of abuse that Black and Minority Ethnic women experience, the wider familial and community-based contexts in which this abuse occurs, and the multiple structural barriers that these women face which impact their access to safety, support and justice. For BAME women, this understanding of cultural and linguistic identities is crucial: women need to see themselves in the services that they are receiving to feel a sense of belonging and affirmation.

There is not an easily accessible pan-London network of these specialists that allow victims/survivors or referrers to identify the most appropriate organisations for an individual.

“Dispersed”: Feedback indicated that dispersed accommodation can better support independence and provide greater geographical flexibility for individuals, based on their needs, however it needs to be accompanied by the same level of support, which is more easily provided in refuges.

Recommendation: Expand provision of refuge accommodation across London to better meet the demand from victim/survivors and enable freedom of movement between boroughs as needed.

Recommendation: Expand provision for underserved cohorts, with a key focus on children, families, BAME and NRPF, including more independent accommodation such as self-contained units as follows:

- **For BAME victim/survivors** - uplift by and for provision, whilst ensuring that all refuge have a set of minimum standards to ensure effective/fair practice and access (including language support), and that the system of referral better identifies and refers into specialist by and for.

LIMITATIONS OF ACCOMMODATION INCREASE THE RISK OF VICTIM/SURVIVORS RETURNING TO THE PERPETRATOR OR EXPERIENCING NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS

- **For families** – increase the provision of self contained units, and improve support provision for young children and adolescents as standard. Formal links should be established via social care, and schools with expertise regarding family cost accessible through all refugees.
- **For victim/survivors with high support needs** – agree an approach for assessing, referring and supporting women with high support needs through safe accommodation. This will be enabled by the provision of 24/7 support, improving the quality and accessibility of in-house mental health and substance misuse support, developing specialist referral pathways with community based services in the same borough as the refuge, and developing training and professional support from community based services for refuge staff.
- **For disabled victim/survivors** – increase the scale of accessible safe accommodation, based on needs of victim/survivors and set requirements on safe accommodation providers for the nature of support available for victim/survivors, both regarding accessibility and specialised understanding of DA in this context.

PERPETRATOR ACCOMMODATION

The consensus from our engagement is that perpetrator accommodation is a means to enable victims/survivors to stay in their homes and has a place in a safe accommodation 'toolkit', however it is recognised that this is only viable under specific circumstances and there is more research, evidence and piloting required to identify the best way to develop it as a service. By not including this in the scope of the duty, the status quo that victims/survivors must uproot their lives to be safe from perpetrators is maintained, however a key questions is whether this is the right time to pursue such a complex change of approach.

Recommendation: Do not prioritise progress on a perpetrator accommodation offer until further work has been undertaken to understand the use cases, cost and benefits of this initiative.

LIMITATIONS OF ACCOMMODATION INCREASE THE RISK OF VICTIM/SURVIVORS RETURNING TO THE PERPETRATOR OR EXPERIENCING NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS

MOVE-ON

Improving the turnover rate and reducing the length of stay at refuges and other emergency accommodation can help manage demand in the system (see slide 40). However, this is predicated on the availability of adequate move-on accommodation.

The Mayor of London has secured £50m of capital and revenue funding from the government to provide move-on accommodation for up to two years, for rough sleepers and survivors of domestic abuse following refuge, until 31 March 2022. The revenue funding is being used to provide support to the residents of the homes, and this is/will be mainly provided by the Casa Project, a consortium of VAWG organisations. It is anticipated by the Greater London Authority that approximately 20% of the homes will be for victim/survivors of domestic abuse. To date, homes have been completed under this scheme, of which 21 are for survivors of domestic abuse.

Despite this, data from RTS, Ascent Partnership and the PHLR shows that there is a lack of housing in London to provide victims/survivors of domestic abuse with sufficient long-term safe accommodation (see slides 41 and 42). This is widely acknowledged to be a bottleneck that impacts availability within refuges. Lack of appropriate move-on negatively affects recovery and increases the risk that a victim/survivor will return to their perpetrator. This is particularly an issue for those trying to find accommodation with children and data from RTS and the Ascent partnership highlight the shortfall in appropriate move-on provision for those with complex needs (see slides 41 and 42). Second stage accommodation is limited by available housing stock within boroughs, and it is important to note that this is in part due to general housing supply issues which are unlikely to be resolved in the medium term. A key issue is the level of support provided to victims/survivors through their transition into move-on accommodation and beyond. Victims/survivors can be found without access to language support or in empty flats with children and no access to funds to buy furniture. The ability of London to effectively meet demand for safe accommodation is significantly enhanced through an effective step down/move-on journey for the victim/survivor.

"Move on typically halts recovery"
- Provider

"It's quite a vulnerable point because they might begin to think, 'I was better off before I left' and wonder if they should go back."
- Provider

Recommendation: Increase the scale of provision of move-on accommodation, aligned with the needs of victim/ survivors, by investigating alternative options to traditional housing stock (such as leveraging more of the private rented sector).

Recommendation: Develop a more effective model of step-down provision to prevent a sole dependency on council owned accommodation for move-on.

Recommendation: Ensure that needs based transition support (during move-on) is recognised as a core part of service provision and receives sufficient funding for a seamless transition from accommodation-based support to community provision for all victim/survivors (particularly those with complex needs)

Recommendation: Develop a set of pan London performance targets focussed on the outcomes of the provision of safe accommodation.

THE CURRENT APPROACH DOES NOT ENSURE QUALITY PROVISION

The new duty includes the following within its scope of support: advocacy/prevention advice to avoid re-victimisation/specialist support for protected characteristics and complex needs/children's support/housing related support/counselling and therapy.

QUALITY

The level of support a victim/survivor receives in London is almost entirely dependent on the accommodation they are housed in. **In-house support services** are widely recognised to be the most effective way of supporting individuals. Enhancement of in-house support services needs to reflect the unmet needs of victims and survivors and be inclusive of the needs of children. Examples including; housing and debt support, family support workers, play therapists, therapeutic interventions for women and children, communication and language support and access to meet a minimum standard of needs in relation to cultural/religious needs and disability. A survey by Women's Aid showed that, in 2016, less than one in four refuges offered specialist in-house mental health support and only one in ten had a specialist drug worker. To support this in house provision bespoke pathways with social care for children and adults as well as access to mental health and substance misuse services should be developed. The Council of Europe calls services for children (including counselling, play space and activities) an 'essential component of refuge provision.

A key focus area for enhancement of support is in relation to children. Children's needs are not being assessed from the perspective of them being victims in their own right, leading to exacerbated trauma and risk of adverse mental health impacts. There is also a key opportunity being missed for preventative work with children, to reduce the risk of either revictimization later in life, or for the child to perpetrate offences in the future.

Recommendation: Prioritise 'in-house' support services within safe accommodation, such as housing, family, substance misuse and mental health support workers.

Where there is low or intermittent demand for particular specialist support, there is currently **no central provision across London to supplement** the support available within safe accommodation (e.g. LGBTIQ+ support, men's support, children's play therapy, culturally specific support, intersectional needs support).

Although Women's Aid and Imkaan have developed standards which have been adopted by their members, there **are no universal standards for provision in London.**

Recommendation: Implement a set of quality requirements for all safe accommodation providers, to set a baseline standard for support, accompanied with a guidance document for all providers, developed in partnership with specialist organisations and owned by the London Housing Directors group.

"Most projects don't fund child support workers" - Provider

"Children are sometimes an afterthought - services tend to focus on helping the victim and assume, in turn, that will help children." - Provider

"There's barely one woman who calls the helpline who doesn't have some form of mental health need" - Provider

"Because there is a limited supply of social housing, LAs put very few requirements around what an acceptable level of safety is to ensure demand is met." - DA organisation

THE CURRENT APPROACH DOES NOT ENSURE QUALITY PROVISION

There is a perception that current commissioning processes prioritise cost (or cost per bed) over quality of support. This encourages a “race to the bottom” and does not address existing issues with provision and outcomes for victim/survivors. Service providers have also stated, in a recent report by the Greater London Authority (GLA), that **24/7 support was the most effective way of supporting women with high support needs**, but often the funding for this was not available.

Recommendation: Prioritise quality through commissioning, rather than price, ensuring ease of access of smaller by and for and community based specialist services to funding.

“You don't see outcomes overnight in this area of work - need to invest now to see the positive outcomes in 5 years.”

- Provider

“You have an insecure workforce because people are never sure if their jobs are secure, so then you get staffing shortages which has an impact on victims/survivors.”

- Provider

SUSTAINMENT OF QUALITY

The **short term, cyclical nature of commissioning** is currently making it challenging for services to maintain a level of provision and evolve over time. A number of providers are using fundraising or internal funds to maintain some areas of provision when they are no longer commissioned to do so. Others have to close down with the hope to re-establish themselves if they are recommissioned. Providers (particularly by and for providers) require longer term funding to enhance and evolve provision over time and to develop referral pathways integrated with wider community services to maximise what the network of VAWG and statutory services in London could offer.

Recommendation: Uplift the funding provided to safe accommodation providers to ensure the development, maintenance and extension of a quality service offer across all of London, such as the expansion of referral pathways and relationships (not just increasing placement numbers).

THE OPERATING MODEL IS NOT MEETING THE NEEDS OF VICTIM/SURVIVORS

The new legislation doesn't encourage a **comprehensive systematic response** to meet the needs of victims/survivors who require refuge. It is for London to decide how far it wants to go in **improving the operating model** to meet the needs of victims/survivors, through broader investment and partnership work, to develop a more comprehensive strategy and system of support.

Recommendation: Develop a safe accommodation partnership strategy that addresses the needs of victims/survivors using the entire safe accommodation eco-system, rather than being restricted by the scope of the legislation.

SCOPE OF THE MODEL

Although there are benefits to a regional approach, devolving responsibility to Tier 1 authorities, **without an overriding national approach**, limits the ability of the country to ensure a consistent level of support for victims/survivors (regardless of their geography), limits our ability to set standards and propagate best practice, and provide national services for specialist support. London has a diverse population with diverse needs. Where there are particularly low levels of demand for particular types of support, it is more challenging for Tier 1 local authorities to meet that need. In such cases, there may be great benefit in regional or national support provision.

The legislation sets a scope of safe accommodation which **excludes a number of accommodation solutions** that are an integral part of the safe accommodation ecosystem in London (partly due to the housing crisis), such as temporary accommodation which is often isolated from wider specialist support. **Temporary accommodation** is used in many cases in London as an alternative to refuge, due to either lack of availability or lack of awareness of refuge provision. It often does not meet the needs of victims/survivors, for example often being mixed gender, not being sufficiently safe from perpetrators, and not providing appropriate support to victims/survivors (e.g. the types of support included in scope of the duty). By not including temporary accommodation in the scope of the duty whilst it continues to be used as a form of safe accommodation, victims/survivors will continue not to receive the support they require.

Recommendation: Work with Tier 2 local authorities to uplift the quality and type of temporary accommodation integrated with community-based outreach / floating support as temporary solution to the deficit of refuge space.

"Structural problems and a funding crisis has an impact on the ability of refuges to develop to address specialist needs"

- Provider

"We welcome the new DA Act but we don't want to be limited by it. We want to use the Act to galvanise this work but not be the be all and end all. We should be pushing for additional models."

- Local authority

"All relationships are dependent on individuals in refuges setting up partnerships with all those services."

- Provider

THE OPERATING MODEL IS NOT MEETING THE NEEDS OF VICTIM/SURVIVORS

Furthermore, it focuses on accommodation-based support, **excluding community-based provision** and floating/outreach services. There is an opportunity for community-based DA services to reach into the temporary accommodation to provide care and support, even when the accommodation is not ideal – this is not included in the duty but could feature as part of a London system wide response to address the significant gaps in housing supply.

By focussing on the physical source of the accommodation as the means for DA specific support, the duty does not recognise the benefit of **floating support** which can supplement any provision through specific accommodation to reduce the element of 'post code lottery' and ensure that the needs of individuals are more likely to be met. This will also support providers in accessing supplementary support where needed.

Recommendation: Develop a system wide approach to addressing the demand from DA victims/survivors with regard to safe accommodation, including community-based provision and temporary accommodation.

As discussed earlier in this assessment, the approach to victims with **NRPF**, is not defined by the legislation and is for London to define for itself, including how this translates into funding and commissioning. As long as victims with NRPF continue to be excluded from the majority of provision, their needs are not being met with regard to safe accommodation. The No Women Turned Away project has evidenced a model to improve outcomes for these victims/survivors, which London can build on

Recommendation: Develop a clear position on NRPF in London, including the financial commitment and expectations of partners.

FEATURES OF THE MODEL

There is a lack of consistency in the support available across London's boroughs, due to the variety of commissioning approaches and investment. For specialist services that have low or intermittent demand, such as communication and language support, LGBTIQ+ support and NRPF (including immigration support), there is an opportunity to develop regional provision with enough capacity to supplement safe accommodation services across London. This is aligned to a similar recommendation in the London victims/survivors needs assessment, which is focused on uplifting access to specialist advice and skills through regional service offers provided by specialist by and for providers e.g. Family Court support.

Recommendation: Develop regional services to supplement the variable support available through safe accommodation providers for specific areas of support, such as translation, immigration, family court support, NRPF etc.

THE OPERATING MODEL IS NOT MEETING THE NEEDS OF VICTIM/SURVIVORS

Data and qualitative feedback demonstrate a disproportionate presentation of women and families from different cultural and religious backgrounds (see slides 25-30) and that specialist services most often provide the best service offer. Commissioning approached should build on existing by and for provisions, also allowing for these specialist services to support and drive up the quality of service offer provided through all safe accommodation.

Recommendation: Maintain and enhance strong by and for specialist services as part of the overall network of safe accommodation provision in London.

CLARITY OF THE MODEL

Our engagement with victims/survivors consistently identified a lack of understanding of the support available to victims/survivors, particularly for those who aren't British citizens. There is a need for greater education on the support available and how access it among the public and particularly for those entering the UK.

Recommendation: Improve the communication of services and support available for victims/survivors to both statutory providers and the public.

This needs assessment has identified the value of specialist safe accommodation, however referrals across London to these services tend to be based on relationships, availability and location. How can we identify suitability of victims/survivors for specialist services across London and how should the referral process work?

Recommendation: Ensure there is transparency in the pan-London network of providers to enable consistency of support available, effective referrals and accessibility of services.

There is not clarity among victims/survivors or a number of those working in the ecosystem on the overall framework for the journey of a victim/survivor who requires safe accommodation, on which to apply a needs-based approach. For example: What are the options for emergency accommodation and what is the maximum period of time appropriate for them to be in that accommodation? What is the typical length of time that appropriate for them to stay in refuge? How long should they be supported in second stage, by default? What are the expectations and plans for move-on into mainstream housing?

Recommendation: Provide clarity and transparency on the operating model to victims/survivors, partners and providers.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW LEGISLATION NEEDS TO BALANCE IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EXISTING PROVISION WHILST PURSUING OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND IT

ENSURING NEW FUNDING DOESN'T DAMAGE CURRENT PROVISION

Moving to a pan London strategy and commissioning framework for safe accommodation presents an opportunity to address needs across London as a whole, without the limitations of local funding pressures. Building on earlier reflections regarding the nature of commissioning of safe accommodation in London, it is important to ensure that current levels of provision, which are already stretched, are maintained during the introduction of the new strategy and commissioning framework. Specialist providers need to be fully engaged in the work to **develop a commissioning approach that enables the expansion and development of their services**. Their support should also be sought on the development of quality standards that apply to all safe accommodation, irrespective of whether it is specialist or not.

Recommendation: Develop the commissioning approach through full engagement with specialist providers to allow for the development and expansion of their services as well as development of quality standards for all safe accommodation.

PHASING DEVELOPMENT

All issues and groups identified in this needs assessment are important, but they cannot all be met in the short to medium term. Development of the safe accommodation strategy should align with the development of the wider data needs and deep dives that are recommended.

Recommendation: Respond to this assessment in a phased way, to invest and sustain existing provision before prioritising over the medium term how provision will better support currently underserved groups, aligned with the development of a further insight through data and deep dives where needed.

"Many if not all of our contracts would require an uplift to reflect trauma-informed practice."

- Provider

"For contracts awarded at LA level, charities themselves have to subsidise these contracts to meet the needs of victim/survivors."

- DA organisation

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW LEGISLATION NEEDS TO BALANCE IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EXISTING PROVISION WHILST PURSUING OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND IT

INNOVATION

The positive outcomes of the commissioning and delivery of emergency refuge provision during the pandemic in London sets out some key learnings and successful outcomes that should encourage continued investment in testing and innovating within safe accommodation.

It would be pragmatic to pursue this on a smaller scale for some of the specific cohorts of victims/survivors not benefitting equally from current service provision, to test demand and outcomes. Testing refuge for those with complex needs should be a priority, with a view to seeking early engagement, support and investment from the health sector.

Recommendation: Continue to encourage innovation and testing of new models of support in the sector.

TIER 1 AND TIER 2 COLLABORATION

For a new strategy to work effectively, Tier 1 and Tier 2 commissioners need to work in close partnership to identify an overall approach for governance and monitoring (particularly between boroughs). The role of MHCLG is also important to clarify, with regard to how the new duty will be monitored and challenged.

Recommendation: Tier 1 and Tier 2 commissioners should work closely together to create the right system of support, including governance and continual evaluation.

7

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS IN RED EXCEED THE SCOPE OF THE NEW LEGISLATION, BUT FORM PART OF A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO MEETING THE SAFE ACCOMMODATION NEEDS OF VICTIM/SURVIVORS

Finding	Recommendations
1. We need to develop a better understanding of demand, supply & funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Pursue development of a strategic dataset across London, that will build a more coherent and clearer picture of demand and supply, aligned with the MHCLG needs assessment template, and incorporate this in commissioning requirements of providers. 1.2 Improve data collection in relation to cohorts of victims/survivors known to experience barriers in accessing safe accommodation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Male victims/survivors ➤ Children victims/survivors ➤ Young women victims/survivors (16-18) ➤ Disabled victims/survivors ➤ Victim/survivors in temporary accommodation ➤ Victims/survivors with mental health issues ➤ Victims/survivors with substance misuse issues 1.3 Conduct further analysis into sanctuary to understanding funding and effectiveness, and recommend how sanctuary should feature in safe accommodation provision across London. 1.4 Develop a consolidated understanding of funding and commissioning of services across London, including scale of commissioning, the content of commissioned contracts and use of charitable/grant funding in the sector.
2. Types of accommodation are not supporting victim/survivors and is increasing their risk of returning to the perpetrator or experiencing negative mental health impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Ensure availability of emergency accommodation for high-risk cases (including NRPF) where immediate access to refuge or other medium-term accommodation isn't available. 2.2 Expand provision of refuge accommodation across London to better meet the demand from victim/survivors and enable freedom of movement between boroughs as needed. 2.3 Expand provision for underserved cohorts, with a key focus on children, families, BAME and NRPF, including more independent accommodation such as self-contained units as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For BAME victim/survivors - uplift by and for provision, whilst ensuring that all refuge have a set of minimum standards to ensure effective/fair practice and access (including language support), and that the system of referral better identifies and refers into specialist by and for. ➤ For families – increase the provision of self contained units, and improve support provision for young children and adolescents as standard. Formal links should be established via social care, and schools with expertise regarding family cost accessible through all refuges.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS IN RED EXCEED THE SCOPE OF THE NEW LEGISLATION, BUT FORM PART OF A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO MEETING THE SAFE ACCOMMODATION NEEDS OF VICTIM/SURVIVORS

Finding	Recommendations
<p>2. Types of accommodation are not supporting victim/survivors and is increasing their risk of returning to the perpetrator or experiencing negative mental health impacts</p> <p>(continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For victim/survivors with high support needs – agree an approach for assessing, referring and supporting women with high support needs through safe accommodation. This will be enabled by the provision of 24/7 support, improving the quality and accessibility of in-house mental health and substance misuse support, developing specialist referral pathways with community based services in the same borough as the refuge, and developing training and professional support from community based services for refuge staff. ➤ For disabled victim/survivors – increase the scale of accessible safe accommodation, based on needs of victim/survivors and set requirements on safe accommodation providers for the nature of support available for victim/survivors, both regarding accessibility and specialised understanding of DA in this context. • 2.4 Increase the scale of provision of move-on accommodation, aligned with the needs of victim/survivors, by investigating alternative options to traditional housing stock (such as leveraging more of the private rented sector) • 2.5 Develop a more effective model of step-down provision to prevent a sole dependency on council owned accommodation for move-on. • 2.6 Ensure that needs-based transition support (during move-on) is recognised as a core part of service provision and receives sufficient funding for a seamless transition from accommodation-based support to community provision for all victim/survivors (particularly those with complex needs). • 2.7 Develop a set of pan London performance targets focussed on the outcomes of the provision of safe accommodation (rather than the balance between demand and supply). • 2.7 Do not prioritise progress on a perpetrator accommodation offer until further work has been undertaken to understand the use cases, cost and benefits of this initiative.
<p>3. The current model across London does not ensure quality provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1 Prioritise ‘in-house’ support services within safe accommodation, such as housing, family, substance misuse and mental health support workers. • 3.2 Prioritise quality through commissioning, rather than price, ensuring ease of access of smaller by and for and community based specialist services to funding. • 3.3 Uplift the funding provided to safe accommodation providers to ensure the development, maintenance and extension of a quality service offer across all of London, such as the expansion of referral pathways and relationships (not just increasing placement numbers). • 3.4 Implement a set of quality requirements for all safe accommodation providers, to set a baseline standard for support, accompanied with a guidance document for all providers, developed in partnership with specialist organisations and owned by the London Housing Directors group.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS IN RED EXCEED THE SCOPE OF THE NEW LEGISLATION, BUT FORM PART OF A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO MEETING THE SAFE ACCOMMODATION NEEDS OF VICTIM/SURVIVORS

Finding	Recommendations
4. The operating model across London is not meeting the needs of victims/survivors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Develop a safe accommodation partnership strategy that addresses the needs of victims/survivors using the entire safe accommodation eco-system, rather than being restricted by the scope of the legislation. 4.2 Develop a system wide approach to addressing the demand from DA victims/survivors with regard to safe accommodation, including community-based provision and temporary accommodation. 4.3 Work with Tier 2 local authorities to uplift the quality and type of temporary accommodation integrated with community-based outreach/ floating support as temporary solution to the deficit of refuge space. 4.4. Develop regional services to supplement the variable support available through safe accommodation providers for specific areas of support, such as translation, immigration, family court support, NRPF etc. 4.5 Develop a clear position on NRPF in London, including the financial commitment and expectations of partners. 4.6 Improve the communication of services and support available for victim/survivors to both statutory providers and the public. 4.7 Ensure there is transparency in the pan-London network of providers to enable consistency of support available, effective referrals and accessibility of services. 4.8 Provide clarity and transparency on the operating model to victims/survivors, partners and providers. 4.9 Maintain and enhance strong by and for specialist services as part of the overall network of safe accommodation provision in London.
5. Implementation of the new legislation needs to balance improving the quality of existing provision whilst pursuing opportunities to expand it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 Develop the commissioning approach through full engagement with specialist providers to allow for the development and expansion of their services as well as development of quality standards for all safe accommodation. 5.2 Respond to this assessment in a phased way, to invest and sustain existing provision before prioritising over the medium term how provision will better support currently underserved groups, aligned with the development of a further insight through data and deep dives where needed. 5.3 Continue to encourage innovation and testing of new models of support in the sector. 5.4 Tier 1 and Tier 2 commissioners work closely together to create the right system of support, including governance and continual evaluation.

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APPENDIX

PROVIDER SURVEY RESPONSES

PLEASE NOTE ANY OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE MOVEMENT OF VICTIMS/SURVIVORS INTO AND/OR ACROSS LONDON TO ESCAPE ABUSE AND HOW THIS SHOULD AFFECT THE COMMISSIONING OF SAFE ACCOMMODATION

Summary of responses

- The majority of placements are referrals from a different London borough.
- There is high demand from outside London.
- There is more movement of victims within the BAME community due to the greater prevalence of honour-based violence (HBV) and DA from multiple perpetrators.
- Movement is high due to the high level of support that would be required to safeguard a victim within the same borough as the perpetrator.
- There is movement across London to areas of greater housing stock.
- Many victims/survivors would prefer to move out their home borough and seek an area where they will have more 'anonymity'.
- Most boroughs see the same number of victim/survivors moving out as they do coming in.
- Movement for victim/survivors with NRPF is often to seek accommodation that will accept them.
- There are no demographic groups who appear to be more likely to move across London.
- Moving across London is harder for those with high support needs, as they would be moving away from services who may currently be supporting them.
- The pattern of movement through referrals can be driven by how easy it is for a referrer to engage with a particular borough.
- There can be barriers to clients moving out of their home borough.
- There can be barrier to victims/survivors being placed within their borough (based on assumptions that they wouldn't be safe).

DO YOU BELIEVE THE NEED FOR SAFE ACCOMMODATION TO BE MORE OF LESS PREVALENT WITHIN ANY PARTICULAR DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP?

Summary of responses

- Demand is more prevalent among the following cohorts of victims/survivors:
 - Young women, age 20-44, 18-25, 36-50 (*differing responses from different providers*)
 - BAME, mixed White and Black African, culturally specific needs, language support needs
 - Victim/survivors with older male children (13+)
 - NRPF, especially those with disabilities, insecure immigration status and single women
 - Deaf, disabled, physically disabled
 - High/multiple support needs, complex mental health issues, substance misuse, harmful practices, sexual exploitation
 - Trans and non-binary women
- Any woman can experience domestic abuse – the importance is in making sure it isn't difficult to access support

ARE THERE ARE PARTICULAR DEMOGRAPHICS, PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS OR SOCIO-ECONOMICS WHO YOU BELIEVE ARE LIKELY TO UNDER-REPORT THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORT?

Summary of responses

Ethnicity/culture:

- BAME
- Some specific cultures e.g. Somalian, East African, Asian Pakistani, MENA and Asian Sri Lankan communities
- Religious Jewish women
- HBV risk
- Language barriers

Economic status / activity:

- Women in work / on higher incomes
- NRPF
- Prostitution
- Perpetrator is a carer

Gender:

- Men

Migration status:

- Insecure immigration status

Age:

- Very young women
- Older women

Other support needs:

- LGBTIQ+
- Deaf, disabled and learning difficulties
- High/multiple support needs
- Sexual exploitation
- Modern slavery
- With a child under a Section 17 safeguarding duty
- Substance misuse
- Complex mental health
- Harmful practices

HOW EFFECTIVE IS EXISTING WRAP-AROUND SERVICE PROVISION? (1)

Summary of responses

Responses referenced some examples of excellent practice with regard to the support provided within/through safe accommodation, including examples of commissioning floating support and community-based volunteer support, and close working relationships with housing teams. However, provision varies significantly from borough to borough, depending on the resources available - "Few boroughs can claim to have a comprehensive approach that coordinates a community response." Increases in intensity and complexity of domestic abuse result in a longer term support requirements.

Support is insufficient for the following areas:

- Support for those with multiple disadvantages
- Mental health support - There are long waiting lists for child and adult mental health support which can delay the recovery for victims and the insight work for perpetrators. Delay in diagnosis could result in further deterioration of mental health, and/or result in further violence. Delays in children's mental health support can result in longer-term trauma-based behaviour, self-harm, difficulties with peers and adult relationships, exclusion from school and risk of exploitation.
- Victims/survivors often don't meet the threshold for mental health or substance misuse support
- Counselling services
- Children's support (e.g. Children and Young Person officers) - support is not consistently commissioned.
- Support for LGBTIQ+ victim/survivors
- Cultural support, particularly for those with high support needs. "In the past 10 years, 50% of Black and minoritised specialist refuges have been forced to close or been taken over by a larger provider due to lack of funding."
- Independent domestic violence advisors' (IDVA) capacity is stretched and there is limited internal capacity to advocate with external services
- Support for NRPF - particular trust issues for victim/survivors regarding services sharing data with immigration enforcement agencies.
- Moving borough can mean loss of support from social services – there is a heavy dependency on advocacy to ensure this doesn't happen.
- More support for parenting required - family support workers and parenting classes.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS EXISTING WRAP-AROUND SERVICE PROVISION? (2)

Support is insufficient for the following areas (continued):

- Support in-house – having a single point of contact avoids the victim/survivor having to repeat their story (and their trauma)
- Gap in the availability of emergency accommodation at the weekend and late at night, with many survivors lacking the knowledge or resources to get to emergency accommodation. “Many boroughs only authorise one night of temporary emergency accommodation, particularly out of hours. This means that survivors of abuse are often left in hotel lobbies, hospitals, or Police stations, not knowing the next steps to finding safe accommodation.”

Wider issues included:

- Gaps in knowledge and skills among non-specialist providers
- Poor communications and a general lack of understanding of DA in statutory agencies (e.g. local authority housing teams), making it resource intensive for safe accommodation providers to support victim/survivors in accessing services.
- Particular lack of knowledge regarding coercive control, for

example how that can lead to rent arrears. “One housing team contacted the perpetrator to confirm the victim’s story.”

- Lack of sustained funding required to increase capacity of support services

HOW EFFECTIVE IS EXISTING MOVE-ON SERVICE PROVISION AND HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SAFE ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITY, REGARDING MOVE-ON? (1)

Summary of responses

Similar to support in safe accommodation, responses cited examples of good practice. However, some boroughs have a significant lack of move-on accommodation available, in terms of both scale and suitability. The 'Finding the Cost of freedom' report by Solace WA indicated women ultimately end up in less secure accommodation through seeking help to flee domestic abuse.

Gaps in move-on provision:

- Substance abuse
- Adaptive accommodation
- Within London (some local authorities are encouraging victim/survivors to accept accommodation outside London)
- Single women (without children)
- Options in different cultural communities (which would allow victim/survivors to re-establish community connections and build safe relationships)
- Under 25's ineligible for 1 bedroom rate due to age

- Affordability of move-on - some victim/survivors are forced to move into shared private rented accommodation

Issues in the operating model:

- Some local authorities stereotype victims/survivors and make assumptions about their needs
- Women are left feeling disempowered and/or re-traumatised
- Delays in the process introduce a high risk of victim/survivor returning to the perpetrator
- Reluctance of local authorities to offer accommodation within the victim/survivors' own borough, even if they have good reason to be seeking that.
- The system currently depends on victim/survivors moving in with family/friends or the private rented sector

HOW EFFECTIVE IS EXISTING MOVE-ON SERVICE PROVISION AND HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SAFE ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITY, REGARDING MOVE-ON?(2)

- Unlawful rejections of homelessness applications based on local connections to the area in which they've applied
- Some local authorities are unwilling to assume statutory duty for housing women moving on, referring them to the borough from which they fled
- Cases of failure of local authorities to recognise victim/survivors living in refuge as homeless
- Poorly conducted vulnerability and eligibility assessments. "A March 2021 survey of our staff found that: 37% said proof of physical violence was requested in most or all [move-on] applications; 50% said survivors were told there needed to be a Police report or the Police were called to corroborate in at least half of all applications; one fifth of respondents said the perpetrator had been called to corroborate."
- Dependency on temporary accommodation, which is often mixed gender, potentially home to substance misuse, often unsuitable for victims/survivors and can lead to risk of exploitation and extortion. Long periods in temporary accommodation can also cause stress for victims/survivors.
- This bottleneck in the system means victims/survivors (and their children) stay in refuge far longer than they should (2+ years)
- Lack of transition support for victims/survivors – underfunded and too short-term. Settlement support should last for one year.

Examples of good practice

- Named points of contact in local authority housing teams for providers to engage with
- Victim/survivors leaving refuge are accepted into Band A of the housing register resulting in all women being housed
- Monthly provider/borough meetings to ensure the securing of move-on

PLEASE USE THIS SPACE TO NOTE FINDINGS FROM REFERRALS AND BARRIERS E.G. WHAT GAPS HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED? DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH SUPPORT TO ACCOMMODATE THE NUMBERS OF REFERRALS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE? ARE THE RIGHT TYPES OF SERVICES IN PLACE WITH THE RIGHT TYPES OF SUPPORT, TO MEET DEMAND? (1)

Summary of responses:

- One provider reported a 137% increase in referrals (mostly self/ through helpline) with no corresponding proportionate expansion of accommodation services for NRPF women, barring one crisis accommodation project funded by MOPAC with limited bed spaces for NRPF users.
- More provision required for:
 - Emergency accommodation (consistent across London)
 - Families (3+ children)
 - Self-contained units
 - Men (emergency accommodation and move-on)
 - Those with physical disabilities
 - Those with teenage daughters (particularly over 18, where they are at risk of being split up)
 - Those with boys aged 13+
 - Those who require carers (particularly family carers as refuge generally only accommodates professional carers)
 - Those with EU pre-settled status, who are not eligible for housing benefit or full benefits
 - Single homeless
 - Insecure immigration status and NRPF
 - Young women and single claimants under 35 (limits to housing benefit at that age)
 - Those with substance misuse issues
 - Women without English as a first language
 - Those with multiple support needs
 - BME
 - LGBTIQ+
 - Women in employment - face huge barriers re affordability of refuges and ineligible for housing benefit
 - Those in full-time education - may be being supported by the university and hence ineligible for support, however there are no assurances that accommodation/support is adequate)

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- Older women, who are more likely to jointly own properties which can mean they are seen as having assets/financial support which they do not actually have access to. This can bar them from certain safe accommodation options. They are also less likely to be able to use the internet to seek help.
- VAWG specific support during move-on
- Current support services are largely delivered through fundraising (rather than commissioned)
- Bilingual staff in services are vital
- Lack of culturally relevant resources
- Lack of victim understanding on how to navigate the system
- *"Many of the referrals we reject are due to not being able to get hold of the referring agency."*
- More IDVA capacity required
- The specialist sector is in decline - in the past 10 years, 50% of BAME refuges have been forced to close or been taken over by a larger provider due to lack of funding
- Migrant women unaware of their rights – perpetrators can hide documentation and that of children so they can't leave. They are less likely to come forward. Some become overstayers without their knowledge because the perpetrator said they'd secured their immigration status. European citizens face particular obstacles.
- NRPF victim/survivors are often left waiting weeks for a destitute domestic violence provision and have to stay with the perpetrator in the interim.
- Sheltered accommodation often has long waiting lists
- Temporary accommodation is often not suitable for older women as there is rarely ground floor access or temporary accommodation that can suit their needs.
- Moving boroughs for safe or temporary accommodation can often be particularly difficult for older survivors as they will have close connections to local health and care services and are sometimes receiving long-term support for their physical/mental health.

PLEASE USE THIS SPACE TO NOTE ANY THOUGHTS ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATION TO BETTER MEET THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS/SURVIVORS E.G. WHAT COULD BE COMMISSIONED TO MAKE REFERRALS MORE SUCCESSFUL AND OVERCOME BARRIERS THAT HAVE EXISTED PREVIOUSLY? HOW CAN MORE VICTIMS/SURVIVORS HAVE ACCESS TO THE SUPPORT THEY NEED? (1)

Summary of responses

- Provide stability for small organisations with long-term commissioning and funding - allow small organisations to compete with big ones.
- Stop using BnBs for families whilst waiting for housing decisions - no assurances it is appropriate or safe.
- Need for ringfenced services for abused migrant women with NRPF, with longer term support built into commissioning priorities (at least 16 weeks or longer)
- Bolster by and for provision
- Funding should reflect the wages required for the expertise of quality staff
- More self-contained units and expansion of self contained accommodation projects
- Closer working with councils
- More safe accommodation places
- More consultation with specialist women's organisations.
- More opportunities for community-based projects e.g. LGBTIQ+ refuge
- Refuge spaces should be less reliant on housing benefit.
- Refuge at Home/Remote Refuge models to lower pressure on formal refuge spaces.
- Ensure counselling/therapeutic support and children's support is funded.
- Establish specific housing pathways out of refuge.
- Pan-London Housing First model.
- Increased funding for early intervention e.g. One Stop Shop (increase opening hours etc)
- Increase in co-located DA specialist practitioners (e.g. in housing, libraries, community services, sexual health clinics, substance misuse services).
- Capital funding for trauma informed refuges to be designed and built.
- Establish more sites to expand refuge provision.

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- Establish a pan-London housing team to facilitate move-on.
- Establish a 1 year move-on programme, particularly for those at risk of HBV
- Facilitate move-on into culturally aligned geographies (e.g. Jewish areas of London)
- Address and resolve structural disadvantages in accessing legal support
- Introduce flexible funding to allow small to mid-size organisations to have resources and capacity to strengthen multi agency working (when you are not a commissioned service by a large provider, referral pathways are not very effective)
- Introduce a better process for transferring victim/survivors between local authorities
- Provide ongoing, consistent specialist domestic abuse / VAWG training for Social Workers, Housing Officers and Police, consistently across all boroughs, to upskill them in meeting the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act.
- Community organisations should be contracted in their own right and independently of larger providers
- Lower the threshold for referrals (i.e. our clients do not always have a CAD number)
- Longer-term funding for consistent support for clients.
- Innovation isn't the issue – get back to basics and provide people with places of safety.
- More single sex supported accommodation for move-on.
- Introduce a pan-London crisis floating support offer to enhance multi-agency working with a particularly focus on under-served parts of the community.
- Establish better links between LA housing and DA services.
- All provision should be from specialist DA services (not generic providers that don't specialise in DA)

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- There is a need for provision for out-of-hours domestic abuse services, to take referrals and refuge intakes during evenings and weekends. At the moment, this is inconsistent across boroughs because different domestic abuse services operate under different hours.
- Replication of Southwark Women's Assessment Hub. Tenure should be separate from support so women don't have to move when their needs reduce.
- Self-contained accommodation with medium support levels should be an option for move-on.
- Training and awareness on NRPF, particularly that not all migrant women are no recourse.
- Single points of contact for NRPF women so they aren't signposted to lots of other agencies.
- Offer wider accommodation options, particularly that can accommodate men and children, rather than a typical 'house style' approach for refuges.

PLEASE NOTE ANY THOUGHTS RELATING TO HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR PERPETRATORS, WHICH MAY BETTER ENABLE VICTIM SAFETY AND RECOVERY (1)

Summary of responses

Many responses recognised the opportunity in this area. However, they also referenced its limitations and emphasised that it should not be at the expense of accommodation for women.

Limitations:

- "Priority should be safe housing for victim/survivors", "Not at the cost of reducing funding for survivors."
- "Does not work in cases of multiple perpetrators and hostility from community."
- "Need to be accompanied with work with professionals to break the cycle of behaviour and enable the perpetrator to understand the impact of his action on the victim/survivor(s) (particularly children).
- Perpetrators should be held to account
- Resettling the perpetrator is very difficult as eligibility for single males is limited
- We cannot assume that perpetrators can be housed and therefore women will be safer
- Perpetrators will have complexity in the same way we see complex needs from victims/survivors
- Would need to ensure that perpetrators cannot return to the victim/survivor
- It is important for the victim/survivor to be engaged in this and to ensure that this is the best option for them and their safety (not just something mandated by organisations)
- If multiple perpetrators are housed in the same building could there be a risk of them colluding to harass their respective victim/survivors.
- If perpetrators are housed in mixed accommodation, they could start a relationship with a new individual and subject them to DA.

PLEASE NOTE ANY THOUGHTS RELATING TO HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR PERPETRATORS, WHICH MAY BETTER ENABLE VICTIM SAFETY AND RECOVERY (2)

Opportunities:

- “Important at the stage of perpetrators being released from prison and to help them break the cycle of abuse and ensure victim/survivor safety (they should be removed from the jurisdiction)”
- May work when perpetrators are staying with victims due to broader issues with housing in London and hence have no option to leave
- In Croydon, establishing a pathway for single homeless perpetrators has led to reduction in incidents of stalking and harassment
- Rehousing should be considered in cases of shared social housing.
- Focus should be on removing perpetrators from joint tenancies/transferring tenancy to victim without a long court process.
- Alternative accommodation for perpetrators where appropriate would allow for V/S and children to safely remain in home and reduce disruption to their lives.
- A national register is much needed to track the perpetrators of multiple women.
- Alternative solutions to keeping victim/survivors safe include:
 - increasing speed with which Occupation Orders are granted
 - more robust risk assessments for joint tenancy applications across the housing sector to check whether DA may be a factor
 - prevent ‘no fixed abode’ situations for DA perpetrators when released from prison

LOCAL AUTHORITY VAWG COORDINATOR SURVEY RESPONSES

PLEASE NOTE ANY OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE MOVEMENT OF VICTIMS/SURVIVORS INTO AND/OR ACROSS LONDON TO ESCAPE ABUSE (INCLUDING ANY SOCIO-ECONOMIC OR DEMOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS), AND HOW THIS SHOULD AFFECT THE COMMISSIONING OF SAFE ACCOMMODATION

Summary of responses

- Victim/survivors are often relocated across London due to risk in their home borough. Some refuges do not accept in-borough referrals.
- There is limited data on movement across London as boroughs/services may find it disproportionate to request the details of victim/survivors if they aren't going to be supporting them.
- One borough cited 10% of their units are for victim/survivors with a local connection (i.e. staying in borough).
- Some victim survivors would prefer to stay in their borough due to school/work/support networks/place of worship.
- Victim/survivors from minoritised communities may prefer to be located in boroughs with a visibly diverse community.
- There is some demand from outside of London, particularly for specialist providers.
- Some movement across London is due to the cost of move-on being less expensive in certain areas.
- Some specialist providers are jointly commissioned by multiple London boroughs to work across them.
- Some movement across London is due to better availability of emergency accommodation in some areas.
- Some boroughs have a non-transient population and do not see the same level of movement as others.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS EXISTING WRAP-AROUND SERVICE PROVISION?

Summary of responses

- Some boroughs are currently funding outreach workers / out of hours support / health IDVAs / children IDVAs / children's workers.
- MARAC works well. There are cases of good joint working and pan-London service commissioning by London Councils and GLA.
- Some boroughs have behaviour change programmes for perpetrators and/or specific children's DA support.
- Some boroughs have floating support and volunteer programmes to provide support in the community. Some boroughs have outreach services, although one referred to theirs are underutilised.
- Some boroughs provide specific support in areas such as: support with employment, training and education, substance misuse, income and debt, mental health and other DA specialist services.

However,

- Wrap-around service provision in some boroughs is dependent on uplift funding from MoJ and/or MHCLG.
- Wider agencies aren't joined up with safe accommodation

provision.

- IDVAs are not available for those not in crisis or high risk.
- More floating and outreach support is required. Some boroughs cannot afford this.
- Support is insufficient for children and young people.
- There is a particular gap for support relating to adolescent to parent violence.
- Mental health support should be available to both perpetrators and victims.
- Partners should fund more elements of wrap-around support, rather than all the pressure being on the local authority.
- More support during move-on from specialist DA workers would be good.
- Wrap-around support for victim/survivors with complex needs, NRPF and disabilities is lacking.
- Communication is a substantial barrier, particularly with those who don't have English as a first language.
- Capacity is stretched and there is very limited capacity to provide support after a victim/survivor has moved out of refuge.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS EXISTING MOVE-ON SERVICE PROVISION AND HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SAFE ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITY, REGARDING MOVE-ON?

Summary of responses

- This is an area requiring improvement for some boroughs. It is important to move victim/survivors into settled accommodation. Unsuitable accommodation can have a detrimental impact on a survivors recovery and their mental health.
- There is a critically low supply of move-on accommodation. Some boroughs have no second stage DA accommodation. Some victim/survivors are forced to go from refuge into emergency or temporary accommodation.
- Temporary accommodation should only be provided in conjunction with specialist domestic abuse support.
- Move-on provision has a heavy reliance on private rented sector. Some landlords are cautious of those in receipt of universal credit.
- It is particularly challenging to source move-on accommodation for victim/survivors with 2+ children, due to the limited number of bedrooms in most move-on properties. Some families are stuck in refuge for longer than necessary, as a result.
- Some boroughs have a dedicated pathways team, although in others, there is reported confusion over the legal rights of women leaving refuge.
- More options are needed for victim/survivors
- The need to find accommodation in more affordable areas may mean children moving schools (having potentially also moved school to move to refuge).
- Some boroughs have a women's housing navigator in place to support the sourcing of move-on accommodation and transition.
- NRPF creates a blocker for effective move-on.

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Summary of responses

- BAME, 16-20 and LGBTIQ+ victim/survivors are less likely to present.
- There are low rates of referrals from health services.
- Limited capacity means one borough was unable to accommodation 40% of requests for safe accommodation.
- Gaps in provision for those with complex needs, men, disabled (particularly neuro diverse and those with mobility needs) and LGBTIQ+ victim/survivors (especially transgender and non-binary) presents a barrier.
- Gaps in provision for victim/survivors with their teenage sons means they are more likely to stay with the perpetrator. More independent and semi independent accommodation is required for this cohort.
- More options needed for victim/survivors in secure tenancies with housing associations (particularly joint tenancies). There are barriers around transferring joint tenancies in to the name of the victim/survivor.
- More provision is required for NRPF.
- There is lack of culturally-specialist safe accommodation.
- Access to accommodation can differ based on individual housing officers. The process causes stress for victim/survivors, particularly where they are asked for info they don't have access to.
- The definition of safe accommodation should include temporary accommodation. Some boroughs only have mixed gender temporary accommodation.
- DDVC takes too long to come through and victim/survivors can end up unsupported during that time. There are few spaces available for those who are not DDVC..

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- Specialist intervention for BAME victim/survivors may reduce the number getting to crisis point.
- Adult students can't access benefits – the responsibility is often on universities to support the victim/survivors, but there this is not in the form of specialist safe accommodation in all cases.
- Follow-on outreach support is needed more widely, including resettlement support. More refuge is needed, including more by and for an facilitates than can provide specialist support for children.
- Advice / telephone support in other languages is currently a gap in provision – particularly eastern European, Asian and African languages.
- There is currently a lack of funded to offer all sanctuary schemes projects to offer them wider across London.
- Victims who are working are likely to be benefit capped – in such cases, accommodation should be offered that's dispersed at a subsidised rate.
- There should be an increase in support provision, to assist with the practicalities of claiming benefits, registering with schools and GPs, setting up utilities etc to allow for a smooth transition as the survivor begins a new life away from their perpetrator. There should be a greater use of enforcement measures such as DVPOs and non molestation orders to enable more victim/survivors to stay at home. Panic alarms should be available for all (not just high risk).
- Privately rented accommodation is not a realistic option for people on benefits. More training is needed for the rented accommodation and housing association sector to understand the dynamics of DA and their duties to support victim/survivors.
- The Housing reciprocal agreement needs to be strengthened.
- There is a lack of funding to offer sanctuary scheme to all London residents.

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Summary of responses

- Increase housing stock. Introduce dedicated housing provision for survivors of DA.
- Introduce community outreach services and community DA champion programmes.
- Introduce a pan London support model with shortened pathways to support.
- Improvement data management for enabler victim/survivor pathway mapping.
- Introduce specialist support for: women with older sons; LGBTIQ+ survivors; male survivors; survivors with NRPF; over 60s; disabled victim/survivors.
- Ensure there is therapeutic support at refuges.
- Increase the longevity of support during move-on, including furnishing of empty new homes.
- Introduce longer term funding / commissioning (more than 12 months).
- Introduce central commissioning of some services such as translation / interpreting, children and young people, LGBTIQ+.
- Raise awareness of safe accommodation (including myth-busting) within specific communities to encourage referrals/presentations.
- Re-introduce hospital IDVAs to support pathways for those who present at A&E.
- Introduce DA specific teams in housing solutions departments.
- Train youth workers to become young person IDVAs.
- Apply a Housing First model across London.
- Increase funding for 'one stop shop' models for support.
- Increase the co location of DA specific practitioners.
- Introduce capital funding of projects for more trauma informed refuges.
- Develop a standard offer for victim/survivors to be able to stay in borough.
- Introduce tailored support for both empowerment and independence.

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- Introduce a multi-agency Housing Operational Group to discuss/promote good practice)
- Introduce a befriending service for those moved out of borough.
- Ensure there are more options available for victim/survivors (through commissioning).
- Expand housing reciprocal.
- Expand the Ascent advice line, particularly for those without English as a first language and who have specific cultural needs / barriers
- Establish a pan London housing team.
- Develop a faster process for retaining secured tenancies (currently 6+ months)
- More mandating of the proportion of new developments to become available as social housing.
- Improve mental health support.
- Ensure that a new criteria under the welfare benefits system caters to women who've experienced financial abuse.
- Introduce a specialist immigration service tailored to DA.
- Ensure access to legal aid for all victim/survivors.
- Invest in the early identification of DA through health and social services.
- Train all housing options staff to work with families in crises.
- Ensure all boroughs are DAHA accredited.
- Introduce better processes for working with private landlords.
- Design a London refuge pathway where all boroughs contribute fairly to the pool of provision and where provision is allocated on a needs basis (not preference of the provider)
- Conduct research to identify where more work is needed to improve MARAC effectiveness, to take action against perpetrators and to improve victim/survivor safety to reduce risk of needing refuge.
- Introduce pan London funding for provision of sanctuary schemes across all boroughs.

PLEASE NOTE ANY THOUGHTS RELATING TO HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR PERPETRATORS, WHICH MAY BETTER ENABLE VICTIM SAFETY AND RECOVERY. (1)

Summary of responses

- Many boroughs support the concept of managed accommodation/support for perpetrators as a means of ensuring safety of victim/survivors in their own homes and reducing disruption to their lives, if it is safe to do so. All councils should have a pathway for perpetrators of DA who cannot afford accommodation to be given accommodation quickly.
- Some boroughs are already pursuing perpetrator programmes including 1-2-1 support and group work, which has been found to work on a case-by-case basis. Incidents of stalking and harassment have reduced through Croydon's drive programme, which secures accommodation for homeless perpetrators. One of the piloting boroughs of the Early Intervention and Accommodation project has not yet made any successful referrals.

Complexities were highlighted as follows:

- More support is required for perpetrators to leave the family home and for victims to stay in their home with their children.
- Any housing solutions needs to be accompanied by behaviour change.
- Housing for survivors should be the priority.
- More steps should be taken to hold the perpetrator to account e.g. removing a perpetrator from a joint tenancy without a long court process.
- The practicalities of perpetrator accommodation should be considered e.g. mixed gender versus same gender (and the risks of either).
- Alternative solutions to keeping include:
 - Increase speed with which Occupation Orders are granted
 - More robust risk assessments for joint tenancy applications across the housing sector to check whether DA may be a factor
 - No NFA situations for DA perpetrators when released from prison"

PLEASE NOTE ANY THOUGHTS RELATING TO HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR PERPETRATORS, WHICH MAY BETTER ENABLE VICTIM SAFETY AND RECOVERY. (2)

- Improved data and insight required regarding perpetrators overall before developing a strategy. Research New Zealand and Australia models for removing perpetrators.
- Decisions should be in consultation with the victim/survivor.
- LA housing staff require training on their legal options for removing perpetrators from properties.
- Consider funding a perpetrator specialist to sit on MARACs across the UK.
- Would require an overall holistic approach to behaviours including a range of programmes and interventions to stop abusive behaviour and reoffending.
- Engage with private sector landlords and agents to identify DA (in their own or another property) as a breach of tenancy across London. Amend tenancy agreements to ensure victim/survivors can stay in their tenancies if perpetrators are excluded.
- There is lack of rehabilitative programme for perpetrators in London.
- Not all perpetrators are part of the criminal justice process, which is a barrier.
- There are insufficient properties available at present to make this work.
- There is a risk of the perpetrator returning to the family home.