

Women's Aid Federation of England
Annual Survey of Domestic Violence Services
2009-10

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 About Women's Aid

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

In partnership with our national network, Women's Aid runs public awareness and education campaigns, bringing together national and local action, and developing new training and resources. We provide a package of vital 24-hour lifeline services, and a variety of publications including the *Expect Respect* Education Toolkit, our on-line resource, *The Survivor's Handbook*, (now translated into 10 languages), and a practical guide to running support groups and self-help groups - *The Power to Change* – which we produced in partnership with other European women's organisations. The Survivors' Forum is available on our website for women who have been affected by domestic abuse to share their experiences and to offer support to one another. We also provide a wealth of online information on domestic and sexual violence, all available at www.womensaid.org.uk.

Women's Aid also provide a website for children and young people, www.thehideout.org.uk. The Hideout offers a messageboard children and young people under 21 to share their views and thoughts about domestic abuse.

In partnership with Refuge, Women's Aid run the Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline. We also produce *The UK Gold Book* which is the only public directory of domestic abuse services, and is the result of a partnership between Northern Ireland Women's Aid, Scottish Women' Aid, Women's Aid Federation of England and Welsh Women's Aid, through which we have developed the UKrefugesonline database, UKROL. The online Women's Aid Domestic Abuse Directory contains contact details for these organisations and services: see http://www.womensaid.org.uk/azrefuges.asp?section=00010001000800060002®ion_code=0111&x=7&y=4

1.2 Services provided by domestic violence sector

In addition to the work carried out by our national office, our England-wide network of local community-based domestic and sexual violence organisations also provide vital direct services to women and their children. These include:

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

- **Outreach, floating support and other non-refuge based services** providing a wide range of advocacy and support, including:
 - resettlement services - enabling women and their children to make new lives in the community after leaving refuge;
 - drop-in centres and survivors' support groups;
 - telephone help lines;
 - counselling services for those who have experienced domestic and sexual violence;
 - specialist court advocacy services;
 - Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs)
 - Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs)
 - floating support schemes providing advocacy and support to families living in the community.

1.3: Our annual surveys

Women's Aid conducts a survey of our national network of domestic violence services each year in order to get a fuller picture of their use. As in previous years, the survey comprises three separate sections:

- The Annual Survey (Survey 1) covering use of services for the preceding year, April 1st 2009 to March 31st 2010.
- The Women's Aid "Day to Count" Snapshot (Survey 2) – focusing on use of the same services on one typical day, June 10th 2010¹.
- The Service Users' feedback surveys (Survey 3) which asks for additional data about women using refuge accommodation and non-refuge based services on the specified date(s) during the week 7th to 11th June 2010.

Together, these three questionnaires provide us with information about the services provided by Women's Aid national network, and the numbers of women and children supported by these specialist domestic violence services, as well as a more detailed snapshot of a selected sample of service users. As in other years, we have included a few additional questions on specific topics. This year, in Survey 1 we asked about each organisation's involvement in, and views on, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs), and also – in view of the continuing concerns about the funding and commissioning of domestic and sexual violence services – about their sources of funding. We also asked about individual women's experiences of MARACs in our Service Users' Feedback Surveys.

We have tried to limit the range and detail of the survey questions in order to make it easier for our national network of services to complete, and to improve the response rate. Most service providers prioritise meeting the demand for services from victims of domestic violence over filling in

¹ For non-refuge based services, which do not always operate every day, we have – as in previous years - suggested organisations use data from the week commencing 7th June 2010.

questionnaires – which also means that some organisations are sometimes unable to respond at all.

In order to account for those organisations that do not respond to the questionnaire, we have, for a number of years, calculated an estimated total figure based on the data given by those organisations (between two-thirds and three-quarters of the total) for which we have full information. This means that in some sections of the report, we are using estimated figures extrapolated from the raw data we have collected, based on the response rates for that section of the survey, or for the survey as a whole. We believe that these estimated figures give a more accurate picture of the total numbers of women and children seeking help via our network's services, and they also enable comparisons from year to year.

1.4: Content of the report

This report contains an overview of the findings of this year's surveys, and where relevant compares them with findings over the past three years.

Chapter 2 of this report provides information on the methodology and response rate. In Chapter 3, we then provide the findings of Section 1 of our Annual Survey for 2009-10, giving information on the range of services offered and the total numbers of women and children using these services. Where relevant, data from previous years' surveys are also given in order to allow comparison across time. By comparing data over this time period we are able to analyse trends and consider the wider implications of any changes for Women's Aid network of services and our work within the domestic violence sector.

In Chapter 4, we then look at the findings from the "Day to Count" (Section 2 of the Annual Survey), which gives information about the use of services on one particular day (Thursday June 10th 2010) – or, in the case of non-refuge services (which may operate on one or two days a week, only) during the specified week, from Monday 7th to Friday 11th June inclusive.

In Chapter 5, we summarise the main findings from the Service Users' Survey (Section 3 of the Annual Survey), which give more detailed data from a sample of women and children using both refuge and non-refuge services in England on the same date. Chapter 6 provides an overall summary and a brief conclusion.

1.5: Definitions

These terms are used throughout the report:

- **Domestic violence** (sometimes called domestic abuse) is physical, sexual, psychological or financial violence that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship and that forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. This can include forced marriage and so-called 'honour crimes'. Domestic violence may include a range of abusive behaviours, not all of which are in themselves inherently 'violent'.

- **Sexual violence and abuse** includes a range of different behaviours of a sexual nature which are unwanted and take place without consent or understanding. Sexual abuse is often a component of domestic violence - for example, partners and former partners may use force, threats or intimidation to engage in sexual activity; they may taunt or use degrading treatment related to sexuality, force their partners to use pornography, or to engage in sexual activities with other people.
- **Refuge-based services:** services provided and based in a refuge house by domestic and sexual violence organisations, (often alongside the provision of other community-based services.)
- **Outreach or non-refuge based services:** services not provided in conjunction with accommodation (although the individual organisation may also provide refuge-based services), but based within, and serving, the wider community.
- **All organisations** - means the total number of organisations providing domestic and sexual violence services, both refuge-based and non-refuge-based.
- **No recourse to public funds:** Women who, as a result of their immigration status, have “no recourse to public funds” are not eligible for welfare benefits (such as housing benefit), and cannot access public services, such as temporary accommodation. (They are, however, eligible for legal aid – in principle; though in practice it may be hard to come by). When women with no recourse to public funds are accepted into refuge accommodation, the immediate costs often have to be covered by the refuge organisation.

1.6: Acknowledgements

Women’s Aid would like to thank all those from our national network of domestic violence organisations who responded to the Annual Survey 2009-10, and thereby enabled us to compile these figures. We are particularly grateful as we have requested information from our network on various occasions recently.

Chapter 2: Survey design and response rate

The Women's Aid Annual Survey 2009-10 comprises three separate sections:

- Section 1, which collects figures of women and children using specialist domestic and sexual violence services during the previous financial year April 1st 2009 to March 31st 2010.
- Section 2: an annual snapshot of women and children using domestic and sexual violence services during the week June 7th to 11th 2010, and specifically (in the case of refuge accommodation) on June 10th, the "Day to Count".
- Section 3, the Service Users' Feedback Survey, which collects more detailed information about a sample of women and children using specialist services during the same week, June 7th to 11th 2010.

These surveys apply to all organisations providing any direct services to women and/or children who are or have been experiencing domestic or sexual violence². From our database, we identified all those organisations registered with Women's Aid and currently providing such services within England. Questionnaires were sent out in May 2010 to more than 400 separate organisations or sections of organisations, both by surface mail and by email, wherever possible. In some cases, we sent out more than one email to the same organisation, but asked that only one questionnaire be filled in for each service provided; i.e. one organisation could choose to fill out separate questionnaires for separate parts of their service, if that was easier for them; alternatively, the overall umbrella organisation could fill in one questionnaire for all those services within its remit. In either case, we asked them to indicate clearly which service(s) were covered in each response.

The initial closing date was June 18th, but this was subsequently extended (after several reminders) in order to maximise response, with a final closing date of the beginning of September. Several organisations sent in composite responses, covering more than one service; others had merged with other organisations, or had ceased to provide relevant services, or had closed completely. These mergers and closures resulted in a final total of 341 relevant organisations, of which 263 (77%) provide refuge accommodation, and 253 (74%) provide other non-refuge based services³. 177 (67%) provide both refuge-based and other services.

226 out of 341 eligible organisations⁴ responded to at least one section of the survey – a response rate of 66% overall. 190 responding organisations provide refuge accommodation, and 182 provide non-refuge services; 146 responding organisations provide both refuge-based and non-refuge based services. Among those organisations which provided both refuge accommodation and other services, the response rate was – as in previous

² Some of these organisations also provide separate services for men – either as survivors of perpetrators of domestic violence.

³ Three of these provide a helpline, only, one of which responded.

⁴ The total number of separate organisations providing domestic violence services is greater than this. However, some of these are part of larger organisations and provide aggregate responses.

years - considerably higher (82%), suggesting that, in general, the larger organisations, having greater resources and providing a wider variety of services, were more likely to respond. See Tables 1, and 2 below for a regional breakdown and Tables 3 and 4 for an overview of the services provided by these organisations.

Table 1: Response by region

	Responding organisations	Non-responding	Total organisations	Response rate
East Midlands	21	11	32	66%
East of England	22	4	26	85%
London	33	23	56	59%
North East England	18	4	22	82%
North West England	32	17	49	65%
South East England	27	18	45	60%
South West England	21	18	39	54%
West Midlands	20	10	30	67%
Yorkshire and Humberside	29	8	37	78%
Other	3	2	5	60%
Totals	226	115	341	66%

Table 2: Regional breakdown of responding organisations

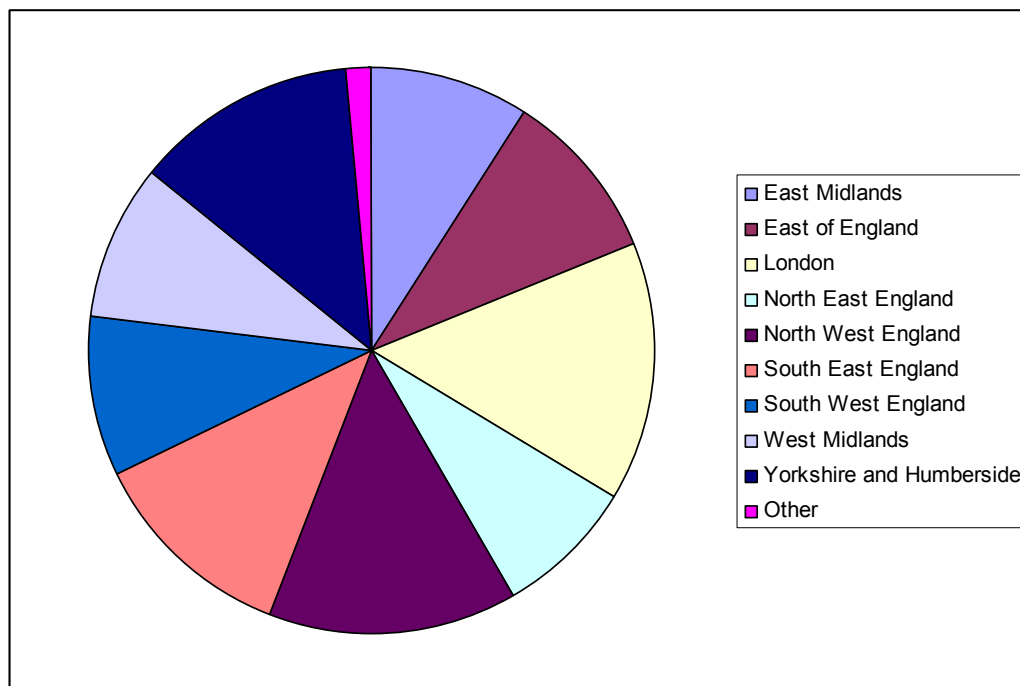
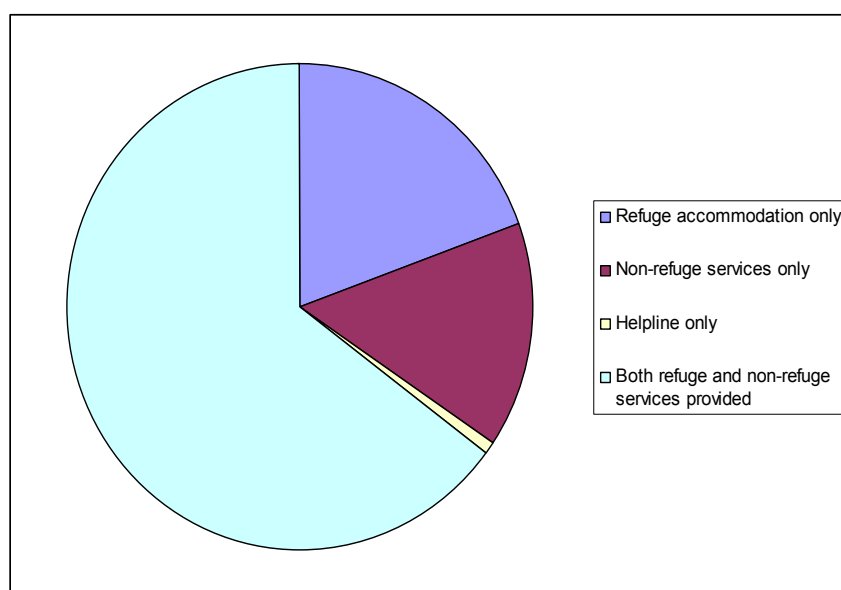


Table 3: Response by type of services provided

	Total organisations	Number responding	Number not responding	Response rate
Refuge accommodation only	86	44	42	51%
Non-refuge services only	73	34	39	47%
Helpline only	3	2	1	67%
Both refuge and non-refuge services provided	177	146	31	82%
DK what services provided	2	-	2	0%
Total organisations	341	226	115	66%
All those providing refuge accommodation	263	190	73	72%
All those providing non-refuge services (including helplines)	253	182	71	72%

Table 4: Responding organisations: Services provided



In general, organisations which provide a variety of different services will tend to be larger than organisations providing one specific service – either refuge accommodation or one or two sorts of non-refuge-based service. The relatively large discrepancy in response rates between organisations providing a variety of different services and those providing **either** refuge accommodation **or** non-refuge-based services may reflect this; i.e. that smaller organisations may be less likely to have the resources to complete our surveys.

For most purposes, extrapolated estimates will be based on the response rate of 72% which is true for each of the main categories of a) all organisations providing refuge accommodation and b) all organisations providing non-refuge accommodation.

Chapter 3: Annual Survey 2009-10: Findings

3.1. Refuge accommodation: Provision and numbers supported annually

190 responding organisations provided refuge accommodation for women and children during the year 2009 – 2010. The tables overleaf give the number of separate refuge houses provided by these organisations, and the number of families they can take at any one time. We have extrapolated from the raw data on the basis of a 72% response rate for organisations providing refuge accommodation. This provides an estimate taking into account non-responding organisations; however, given the probable differences of size between responding and non-responding organisations (see previous page) this could provide a somewhat misleading picture with regard to the number of houses and refuge places provided.

Table 5: Number of refuge houses provided

How many refuge houses did you provide during 2009-10?	Number of organisations (responding organisations only)	Refuge houses (responding organisations only)	Estimated total refuge houses (on basis of 72% response rate)
1 refuge	92	92	-
2 refuges	42	84	-
3 refuges	16	48	-
4 refuges	9	36	-
5 refuges	8	40	-
6 refuges	6	36	-
7 refuges	3	21	-
8 refuges	2	16	-
9 refuges	4	36	-
10 refuges	1	10	-
More than 10 refuges	7	77+	-
Totals	190 organisations	496 houses	690+

The above figures suggest that over the past year there has been a 23% reduction in the total number of refuge houses, but less than a 3% fall in the number of family units available. See also Tables 6 and 7 overleaf.

3.2: Women and children accommodated

We asked all those organisations providing refuge accommodation to tell us how many women and children and children in total used that accommodation throughout the year⁵. The annual total of women and children supported within refuge accommodation for 2009/10 is given in Table 8 overleaf. This table gives both the figures for the 190 responding organisations, and the estimated figures for all 263 organisations providing refuge accommodation based on a response rate of 72%⁶.

⁵ "How many women and children in total stayed in refuge accommodation provided by your organisation between 1st April 2009 and March 31st 2010?"

⁶ However, please bear in mind the caveat on page 12 regarding the respective sizes of responding and non-responding organisations.

On that basis, we estimate that **17, 615 women** and **17, 785 children** were supported in refuge accommodation during the year 2009/10. (Two of the 190 responding organisations providing refuge accommodation were unable to give an annual figure for the numbers of women using that accommodation during the year, and a further two - making four altogether - were unable to provide figures for the numbers of children using the service.)

Table 6: How many units of accommodation at any one time?

How many family units? ⁷	Number of organisations (responding organisations only)	Number of units (responding organisations only)	Estimated total number of units (on basis of 72% response rate)
2 units	1	2	-
3 units	3	9	-
4 units	2	8	-
5 units	11	55	-
6 units	16	96	-
7 units	4	28	-
8 units	24	192	-
9 units	15	135	-
10 units	14	140	-
More than 10 units - please state	99	2136	-
Totals	190 organisations	2801	3890

Table 7: Refuge accommodation and total family units from 2006 to 2010

	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10
Number of separate refuge houses (estimated)	680	800	900	690
Total number of family units (estimated)	3, 655	6, 000	4, 000	3,890

Table 8: Women and children in refuge accommodation 2009/2010

	Responding organisations providing refuge accommodation	All organisations providing refuge accommodation (estimated)
Total women using refuge accommodation 2009-2010	12,680	17,615
Total children using refuge accommodation 2009-2010	12,805	17,785
Total number of organisations to which these totals relate	190	263

While the numbers of women using refuge accommodation annually have tended to fluctuate around 17,000 each year, the number of children has declined since the peak in 2006/7 and has decreased markedly in the last year. See Table 9 overleaf. Without more detailed research, it is impossible to say why this might be; however, possible reasons could include falling family size, and the tendency for women to have children later in life,

⁷ That is, the number of families can be accommodated at any one time.

combined with greater awareness of domestic abuse and the options available; resulting in a greater number of women leaving their abusers prior to becoming parents.

Table 9: Estimated numbers of women and children using refuge accommodation annually (2002/3 – 2009/10)

Survey Period	Women	Children
2002/03	17,094	21,465
2003/04	18,569	23,084
2004/05	19,836	24,347
2005/06	16,815	19,450
2006/7	17,545	25,451
2007/8	17,670	19,390
2008/9	16,750	19,005
2009/10	17,615	17,785

Responding organisations provided refuge to **445 women** and their **496 children** who had **no recourse to public funds**. This compares to 321 women and 348 children last year – a rise of 39%⁸. This rise could in part be due to the Home Office pilot scheme, the Sojourner Project, which commenced on 30th November 2009, and provides short-term funding for women with no recourse who entered the UK on a spousal or partner visa and were eligible to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) under the Domestic Violence Rule. As Table 10 shows, 65 women accessed funding through this project during the four months of 2009-10 that it was operating⁹. Overall, 85% of women and their children with no recourse to public funds and accommodated in refuges managed to access some funding, at least for a time – though in some cases this came from the organisation’s own reserves.

Table 10: Funding for women and children using refuge accommodation and having no recourse to public funds

Source of funding	Number of women ¹⁰	Percentage of all women with NRPF
Sojourner Project/Home Office Pilot	65	15%
Local authority: Children Act	195	44%
Local authority: Community Care Act	12	3%
Local authority: National Assistance Act	26	6%
Other source of funding ¹¹	81	18%
No funding available	66	15%
Total women with NRPF	445	101%

⁸ When adjusted for non-response, this represents 3.5% of the total number of women accommodated.

⁹ The Sojourner Project has now been extended to the end of March 2011, and is likely therefore to have an even impact on the number of women with no recourse accommodated during 2010 – 2011. It is not yet known what – if anything – will replace this pilot scheme after it comes to an end.

¹⁰ This is the actual number from responding organisations only.

¹¹ This often included being funded by the organisation’s own reserves.

3.3. Outreach, floating support and other non-refuge services

253 organisations provided specialist domestic violence services which are not refuge based, and 182 (72%) of these responded¹². Between them, the 179 responding organisations providing non-refuge based services (other than helplines) supported at least 77,240 women and 26,340 children and young people (while a much greater number of children and young people were indirectly supported as a result of the services given to their mothers.)

Extrapolating as before on the basis of a 72% response rate, we estimate that approximately **107,280 women** and **36,585 children and young people** received direct non-refuge based support from domestic violence organisations in England during the year 2009-2010. (See Table 11, below).

Table 11: Women, children and young people using all non-refuge services 2009/2010

	Responding organisations providing non-refuge services	All organisations providing non-refuge services (estimated)
Total women using non-refuge service 2009-2010	77,240	107,280
Total children/yp directly using non-refuge services 2009-2010	26,340 ¹³	36,585
Total children/yp indirectly using non-refuge services 2009-2010	49,910 ¹⁴	69,320
Total number of organisations	182	253

These 179 organisations provided a variety of different services. Figures for those using each of these services throughout the year are given in Table 12 overleaf (responding organisations only). Note that these figures do not add up to the total numbers of women and children using these non-refuge services, as some women and children used more than one service, and would have been counted separately as users of each of these services. In other cases, figures could not be supplied – either because they are not collected at all, or because they are recorded by number of visits/sessions, rather than by individual women.

Comparisons with previous years are given in Table 13 overleaf: as with the figures for refuge residents, the numbers tend to fluctuate from year to year.

¹² Three of these provided a helpline as their only non-refuge based service, and are not included here.

¹³ This figure includes children/young people worked with in schools or youth services in class or group sessions.

¹⁴ That is, the total numbers of children living with women service users, and who therefore might be expected to get indirect support from that offered to their mothers. 35 responding organisations do not keep these figures. Other organisations said that the figures they gave were an estimate, only (and often an under-estimate.)

Table 12: Number of women using specific non-refuge services, 2009-10. (Responding organisations only).

Outreach	28,847
Floating support	7,463
Drop-in	10,970+ ¹⁵
Support groups	5,123
Resettlement services	1,817
Women's Support Service linked to perpetrator programme	1,227
IDVA	14,505
ISVA	1,365
One-to-one counselling	5,934
Specialist sexual abuse services	1,470
Other non-refuge-based service	7,766

Table 13: Estimated numbers of women and children supported annually by all domestic and sexual violence services (both refuge-based and non-refuge-based) 2006-2010

Survey Period	Women – total number supported in all services (estimated)	Children – total number directly supported in all services (estimated)
2006/7	114, 045	48, 651
2007/8	127, 045	61, 540
2008/9	108,690	39,130
2009/10	124, 895 (17,615 in refuge + 107, 280 in other services)	54, 370 (17,785 in refuge and 36, 585 directly supported in non-refuge services)

3.4: Services for men

Sixty-two responding organisations (27% of all responding organisations) also provide some services for male victims of domestic and sexual violence. This is an increase of 22% on the previous year. Seventeen of these run their services for male victims from separate premises and 13 have separate members of staff for this service. Two of these organisations provide only telephone support to male victims, and eight organisations – despite in theory providing support to both sexes - have not yet been asked for support by any men; while a further 32 have supported 10 or fewer male victims during the year.

In total, the 62 organisations have provided support to **1,925 male victims** – an average of just over 30 for each service. This suggests that the increase in the number of services has *not* been matched by an equivalent rise in the number of male victims seeking support: the total number is only 3% greater than during 2008-9.

Thirteen responding organisations provide services for male perpetrators, half of these (7) being run from separate premises to the women's services, and all but 3 having separate staff to work with the perpetrators. **759 men** used

¹⁵ Figures for drop-in services are not always recorded.

these services during 2009-10, an average of 55 per service. This figure is nearly 70% higher than that given by responding organisations last year – though the number of respondents providing a service for male perpetrators has actually declined (from 17 to 13, or almost 25%). This does not, however, necessarily indicate a decline in service provision, but to differential responses from one year to the next. Due to the numbers being small, and to our not having complete information about the provision of such services, it is not possible to extrapolate to all organisations providing such services.

3. 5: Funding of services

The vast majority of refuge and floating support services are funded by Supporting People (SP), supplemented (in the case of refuge provision) by women's rents, mostly paid from housing benefit. Both these sources of funding are at risk – SP from the removal of the ring-fence and the introduction of competitive tendering (which may favour larger generic organisations rather than smaller specialist services), and housing benefit from the proposed cuts to the amount provided.

The SP grant [is] being cut by 4% in 2011-12. We operate on a shoestring as it is and won't be able to absorb further cuts without a reduction in service quality and provision. [635]

Refuge funding seems to be decreasing, as a result we have much smaller staff teams. [234]

As a refuge we are extremely concerned about the cuts in funding that the government is making and the impact it could have on our services. It is essential that we retain our specialist status and we are not absorbed into generic support services in order to cut costs, which would be clearly to the detriment of our service users. [125]

Our refuge is being de-commissioned in October 2010. No further funding secured to continue the refuge - SP in [this area] have decided not to commission an Asian specific service. [500]

Our concerns are about SP funding: whether it will be continued; and without funding, refuge and non-refuge services will cease to exist. [48]

On the other hand, some organisations said their funding was secure, at least for the next few years, as they had recently obtained new SP contracts.

Services other than refuge and floating support (including specialist children's support services, both within refuges and in the community) have to find funding from other sources. Children's services could sometimes obtain funding through the local authority children's services fund, and/or from a charity such as the BBC Children in Need fund, and (very occasionally) from the local Primary Care Trust (PCT). Comic Relief also occasionally funded services for young people. Non-refuge services for women sometimes obtained funding from charitable trusts, or from the Big Lottery Fund; or if they could be classed as "floating support", then SP would sometimes fund them.

3. 6: Monitoring of client outcomes

196 responding organisations (87%) monitor client outcomes, 163 of which have a framework for doing this – most often the Supporting People outcome

forms; though it was pointed out that “many of the questions on the Supporting People outcome record forms are not relevant to domestic abuse”. Others said they work to funders’ requirements – though this had the drawback that different funding bodies often required different monitoring, and standardisation would be helpful. A few organisations have designed their own database, one or two use Outcome Stars, and two use the CAADA monitoring tool. Comments on monitoring included several on the difficulties of using standardised forms which did not always fit clients’ individual circumstances; for example:

SP monitoring forms are very "black and white" - so many of our cases are grey. [137]

Sometimes it's difficult as service users often don't complete forms... [4841]

Not always easy to monitor progress as when in crisis there are negative and positive fluctuations. [436]

I'm not sure we monitor outcomes closely enough and this is now something most funders want evidence of; however we have soft outcomes which are difficult to monitor. [474]

[It] works really well and is incorporated in one to one work with service users. [However, it] can look like a fail if someone leaves the service quite quickly and the outcome is not achieved. [89]

[Monitoring of outcomes] can only be carried out if client has a "planned" ending. Where clients drop out of the service, it is often unsafe to contact. [43]

Several organisations also said they would welcome advice on how best to monitor outcomes as they realised it was an important issue which was increasing in importance, if funding was to be secured and maintained.

3.7: Other work: MARACs

Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) are one of the previous government’s major initiatives for addressing domestic violence. They are aimed at reducing repeat victimisation through regular inter-agency meetings focusing on those judged to be at most risk: relevant agencies share information, provide safety measures and increased police protection, and refer the victim to services that can address her support needs - for example, to a specialist domestic violence service and/or to an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA).

190 of the organisations responding to the survey (84%) said a representative from their organisation regularly attends their local MARAC. 182 of these and a further 18 organisations that did not regularly attend the MARAC said that they also referred women to that forum.

We do not refer to MARAC very often. As a refuge, we only refer to MARAC if the woman returns home or we feel she is unsafe if the perpetrator finds her. While she and her children are in the refuge she is generally safe - so (after discussion) in those circumstances where we believe her to be safe, we do not refer to MARAC. [5142]

Comments on the effectiveness and usefulness of MARACs were mixed. For example, see the following comments, the first two very positive statements contrasting with the third and fourth much more critical quotes below:

MARAC is very useful meeting. It provides all necessary support to DV victims and helps in reducing risks. All participating organisations work together in increasing safety to the victims and their family members. We found that all the victims we have referred have benefitted from the support they have received. Although not directly funded to attend, we find it essential to do so and very important for our victims/survivors. [4802]

MARAC excellent in terms of outcomes and networking. Really pleased to be involved. [4613]

MARAC is an administrative nightmare. All partners have been asking for a review as we are expected to sit in MARAC all day every 2 weeks and send detailed reports in advance which takes another half-day. We understand that the targets are being met and that some MARACs across the country are successful. [However here] little value seems to be coming from this process and it does not seem to be achieving better results for women and children. [519]

Our biggest concern is that women have no option whether they are discussed or not. Also, the meeting has become more of a child protection conference in too many cases. [341]

While most appreciated the need for information sharing and co-ordinated partnership working between agencies in order to increase victims' safety, several were uneasy about women being referred without their consent (and in some cases even without their knowledge), and felt that sometimes the MARAC procedure could become simply a "tick box exercise" which could be very time-consuming and impact on staff workloads and capacities. Moreover, as MARACs direct their resources primarily to those judged to be "high risk", they do not provide support to the vast majority of survivors of domestic abuse, who might not meet those predetermined criteria.

Despite the staff time involved, the vast majority of responding organisations were **not** funded to attend MARAC: 126 of those attending MARACs said they received no funding for attending, and a further 28 said they didn't know whether they received funding or not. Just under one quarter of organisations regularly attending MARAC (46 - plus one that did not attend) were funded to do so.

Our main organisation is not specifically funded to take part in MARAC but we have just secured a new IDVA/ISVA contract for the county, which does contain funding for this. [332]

Not directly funded - it's absorbed into outreach/floating support work. Time consuming - and impacts on workloads and capacities. [1014]

We support the work of MARAC; however, we find it a demand on time as MARAC meets every 2 weeks. Research is to be prepared 1 week before and can take a lot of administration. Also small organisations such as ourselves have to provide secure email sites and sometimes do not have the resources the statutory agencies have. [425]

As the comment above illustrates, smaller organisations may find attendance at MARAC, together with all the associated paperwork, quite a drain on their often limited resources, so may need to make an assessment as to whether their regular participation is of value to them and their service users; some, for example, attend only when one of their current clients is the focus of discussion.

Chapter 4. “Day to count” Snapshot (Survey 2)

4.1: Day to count: Introduction

The Women’s Aid “Day to Count” (Survey 2) aims is a snapshot survey giving the numbers of women and children supported by each responding organisation on one specific day (June 10th 2010) in refuge accommodation and during the week 7th -11th June¹⁶ in other non-refuge based services.

213 organisations responded to Survey 2¹⁷ (the Day to Count), 182 of which, during the week in question¹⁸, provided refuge accommodation, and 168 provided non-refuge services. 138 provided both refuge and other services. 30 provide only outreach services; one provides a helpline only; and 43 just provide refuge accommodation (or refuge plus helpline).

4.2: Day to count: Refuge accommodation

On Thursday 10th June, **2,157 women** and **2334 children** were resident in refuges provided by the 182 responding organisations. The tables below and overleaf (Tables 14-16) give the age and ethnic breakdown of the women residents, and ages of the children. The proportions are very similar to those given in 2008-9.

Table 14: Day to count: Number of women residents – ages

Age groups	Number of women residents in this age group	% of all women residents on 10 th June 2010
16 - 20 years	225	10%
21 – 25 years	504	23%
26 – 30 years	438	20%
31 – 35 years	341	16%
36 – 40 years	248	11%
41 – 45 years	184	9%
46 – 50 years	104	5%
51 – 55 years	46	2%
56 – 60 years	15	1%
61 – 65 years	10	0.4%
66 years and over	13	1%
Age unknown	29	1%
Totals	2,157	100%

1,458 (68%) of these women had children with them, and/or were pregnant. 270 adult refuge residents (12%) were noted as being disabled. 124 (6%) were in employment (full or part-time); 123 (6%) had no recourse to public funds¹⁹; and 73 (3%) were known to be escaping forced marriage.

¹⁶ We asked for data from the whole week for non-refuge services as many services of this kind operate on only one or two days a week, so would provide a more accurate record.

¹⁷ This equates to a 62% response rate for all organisations, and 70% for those providing refuge accommodation.

¹⁸ A few services which were provided during the year 2009-10, and therefore included in the annual survey data, were no longer running by this date.

¹⁹ This is almost twice the percentage of women with no recourse supported in refuge accommodation throughout the year (3.5%). As in previous years, this may in part be

Table 15: Age groups of children resident in refuge accommodation on Day to Count: Responding organisations only

Age groups	Number of children	% of all child residents
Under 5 years	1213	52%
5 – 10 years	778	33%
11 – 16 years	343	15%
Total	2334	100%

Table 16: Ethnic groups of women residents on Day to count

Ethnic group	Total number of women residents of this ethnic origin	% of women residents on June 10th 2010
White British	1190	55%
White Irish	21	1%
Other White background	101	5%
White and Black Caribbean	64	3%
White and Black African	20	1%
White and Asian	11	0.1%
Any other mixed background	33	2%
Indian	72	3%
Pakistani	182	8%
Bangladeshi	32	2%
Any other Asian background	58	3%
Black Caribbean	71	3%
Black African	102	5%
Any other Black background	37	2%
Chinese	11	0.1%
Traveller community	7	0.3%
Any other ethnic group	57	3%
Unknown	88	4%
Totals	2157	100.5%

Responding refuge organisations were unable on that day to provide refuge accommodation to 198 women and their children who were seeking it – usually because the service was full – though some of these would have found refuge accommodation elsewhere. The number turned away was slightly smaller than last year, and it appears that there might have been slightly more places available on that day in England as a whole than in previous years. The proportion of these who could not be accommodated because they had no recourse to public funds was half that of last year; but the proportion of those turned away for other reasons – often because they needed more support than the refuge organisation was currently able to offer,

explained if women with no recourse tend to stay in refuge accommodation for longer, due to being unable to access funds to move into their own accommodation. It is also possible that more such women might have been provided with accommodation in the final few months of the year, due to the resources available under the Sojourner Project pilot: see p.15 above.

rose slightly (from 24% to 28%). The reasons for turning these women away are shown in Table 17 below.

We do not know how many of the women who were initially turned away eventually found refuge accommodation elsewhere: based on the figures above and the number of family units available overall, we can estimate that more than three-quarters of refuge spaces were occupied on that date, and the spaces which were available would not necessarily have been appropriate for those women seeking accommodation at that time.

Table 17: Reasons for being unable to provide refuge accommodation

Reason	Number of women	% of all women turned away
Turned away because refuge was full	136	69%
Turned away because woman had no recourse to public funds	6	3%
Turned away for another reason	56	28%
Total turned away	198	100%

In order to provide a rough comparison with previous years, we have extrapolated on the basis of a 70% response rate for this part of the survey. See Table 18 below.

Table 18: Estimated numbers of women and children using refuges on a typical day			
	June 10 th 2010	June 11 th 2009	November 2 nd 2007
Women accommodated	3080	3233	3156
Children accommodated	3335	3402	3648
Women turned away	285	315	500

4. 3: Women and children using non-refuge services during one typical week

Responding organisations were not always able to give accurate figures for women and children using their non-refuge services during the week 7th – 11th June: sometimes figures were not collected separately, and age and ethnic breakdowns for services such as drop-in were often not available. We can say only that **more than 7,920 women** used these services, and that more than **1, 725 children and young people** were directly supported either in specialist services in the community, or within schools. The number of children who were indirectly supported (on the basis that their mothers were given support during that week) is in excess of 7,950. The figures in Table 19 overleaf are the best estimates we can give from the figures provided. (Responding organisations only.)

Table 19: Ages of women using non-refuge services: Day to Count

Age groups	Number of women service users in this age group	% of all women service users during week 7 th – 11 th June 2010
16 - 20 years	400	5%
21 – 25 years	1190	15%
26 – 30 years	1372	17%
31 – 35 years	1243	16%
36 – 40 years	1045	13%
41 – 45 years	828	10%
46 – 50 years	422	5%
51 – 55 years	270	3%
56 – 60 years	123	2%
61 – 65 years	70	1%
66 years and over	60	1%
Age unknown	897	11%
Totals	7920	99%

Table 20: Ethnic groups of women using non-refuge services: Day to Count:

Ethnic group	Total number of women of this ethnic origin using non-refuge services	% of women using non-refuge services on June 10 th 2010
White British	4873	62%
White Irish	59	1%
Other White background	224	3%
White and Black Caribbean	80	1%
White and Black African	41	0.5%
White and Asian	44	0.5%
Any other mixed background	24	0.3%
Indian	192	2%
Pakistani	416	5%
Bangladeshi	68	1%
Any other Asian background	124	2%
Black Caribbean	139	2%
Black African	145	2%
Any other Black background	55	1%
Chinese	15	0.2%
Traveller community	15	0.2%
Any other ethnic group	134	2%
Unknown	1272	16%
Totals	7920	101%

Responding organisations received more than 1,800 telephone calls requesting help, support and information on the specified day – equating to more than 2,900 calls, based on a 62% response rate. 104 of the responding

organisations (49%) provided a specific helpline for such calls; i.e. more than simply a referral line, but a telephone line which is publicly advertised, and open and accessible at specified times of day, when someone is available to answer calls. The majority of calls – 1,312²⁰ or 73% - were made to these helplines. The other organisations had a phone line which fulfilled only some (or none) of the above criteria, or was simply a general office phone; they nonetheless did receive some calls²¹ for support and information.

²⁰ Estimated as 2,116 on the basis of a 62% response rate.

²¹ 490, which equates to 790 if all such organisations had responded.

Chapter 5: Surveys of Service Users (Surveys 3A and 3B)

5.1: Introduction to Service Users' Surveys

Following on from the "Day to count", Survey 3 aimed to collect more detailed information about a sample of women and children who were using services during that same week in June 2010. This survey was in two parts:

Survey 3A: focusing on women and children who were **resident in refuge accommodation** on one specific day, Thursday June 10th 2010;

Survey 3B: covering women who used **non-refuge-based services** during the week beginning 7th June 2010²².

We asked organisations to select a one in four sample of women using their services on the specified date or dates. If organisations ran several types of service, we asked them, if possible, to try to include at least one woman from each type of service, even if the numbers using that service were less than four on the specified day or days.

5.2 Women and children resident in refuge accommodation

Data were collected on 601 women residents in refuge accommodation provided by 172 separate organisations – an average of just over 3 women for each service²³. The following tables give a breakdown in terms of demographic characteristics including age, ethnicity, and disability.

Age	Number of women	%	
16-20 yrs	55	9%	65%
21-25yrs	96	16%	
26-30 yrs	143	24%	
31-35yrs	95	16%	
36-40yrs	85	14%	29%
41-45yrs	57	9%	
46-50yrs	21	3%	
51-55yrs	10	2%	
56-60yrs	8	1%	2%
61-65yrs	3	0.4%	
66yrs and over	3	0.4%	
Not known	25	4%	4%
Total	601		100%

²² As some non-refuge based services operate only one or two days a week, we thought that a more representative sample could be obtained by not limiting it to one day, only.

²³ Numbers ranged from one to 15; but the vast majority of organisations provided information on less than 5 women residents.

The above table clearly shows that the majority of women resident in refuge accommodation are young – nearly half of them being 30 years of age or under, 65% being 35 or under, and only 20% being over the age of 40.

Table 22: Ethnicities of women residents		
Ethnic origin	Number of women	%
White British	322	54%
White Irish	12	2%
Other White background	29	5%
White and Black Caribbean	12	2%
White and Black African	5	1%
White and Asian	6	1%
Any other mixed background	11	2%
Indian	20	3%
Pakistani	58	10%
Bangladeshi	13	2%
Any other Asian background	15	2%
Black Caribbean	21	3%
Black African	44	7%
Any other Black background	9	1%
Chinese	3	0.4%
Traveller community	4	0.6%
Any other ethnic group	16	3%
Unknown/no information given	1	0.1%
Total	601	99.1%

Table 23: Disability				
Impairments	No. of women	%	Do impairments result from abuse?	
No impairments	467	78%	Not applicable	
Physical impairment	32	5%	Yes	7
			No	25
Sensory impairment	6	1%	Yes	1
			No	5
Mental health impairment	66	11%	Yes	46
			No	20
Learning impairment	9	1%	No	9
Multiple impairments	21	3%	Yes	14
			No	7
Total	601			601

136 women from the sample of refuge residents were disabled – 22% of the total. This is a slightly smaller proportion than last year, but this could be due to the sampling process, rather than indicative of any change in the proportion of disabled women among refuge residents as a whole. 11% of the women (and half of all those who were disabled) attributed their impairments to the abuse they had experienced. This was particularly likely for those women whose mental health was impaired.

The vast majority of women in the refuge residents' sample (528, 88%) were identified as heterosexual. 1% were lesbian, a further 1% bisexual, and the remaining 10% were not asked or did not give the information. One woman was identified as transgender.

Three-quarters of women in refuge accommodation had children under 16 years, and the majority (87% of those with children, 65% of the whole sample) had their children with them in the refuge. We did not collect ages for these children, but data from our day to count suggests that around half the children were aged under 5 years.

How many children?	Women with children		Children with her in refuge ²⁴	% of residents
	Number	%		
1 child	173	29%	144	24%
2 children	172	29%	149	25%
3 children	65	11%	62	10%
4 children	26	4%	24	4%
5 children	10	2%	10	2%
6 children	4	0.6%	3	0.4%
More than 6 children	2	0.3%	0	0%
Has children but no further information	1	0.1%	DK	-
No children	136 (of whom 10 are pregnant)		-	23%
No information whether children or not	12 (1 of whom is pregnant)		-	2%
[Total with children but none in refuge with her]	[56]		-	[9%]
Total	601			100%

The majority of women (nearly one-quarter of the refuge residents' sample) had been with their abusers for between 5 and 10 years (See Table 25, overleaf). The majority of women (79%) had experienced physical, sexual, financial and/or emotional abuse from a male partner or former partner within a heterosexual relationship; however, other forms of abuse had also led to their seeking refuge, and some had experienced multiple abuse from two or more people: see Table 26.

²⁴ Some of these women did not have **all** their children with them in the refuge

Table 25: Length of time in relationship		
How long in abusive relationship?	Number of women	%
Up to 3 months	3	0.4%
3 up to 6 months	7	1%
6 months to 1 year	15	2%
1-2 years	49	8%
2-3 yrs	82	14%
3-4 yrs	53	9%
4-5 yrs	52	9%
5-10 yrs	144	24%
More than 10 years	99	16%
DK/no information	73	12%
Does not apply - never in relationship with abuser	24	4%
Total	601	99.4%

Table 26: Kinds of abuse experienced		
Kinds of abuse	Number of women	%
Heterosexual partner abuse	473	79%
Same sex partner abuse	5	0.8%
Abuse from other family/household members	30	5%
Forced marriage	2	0.3%
Honour-based violence	2	0.3%
Elder abuse (not by partner)	1	0.1%
Rape or sexual assault (not from partner)	2	0.3%
Trafficking or sexual exploitation	1	0.1%
Multiple forms of abuse	72	12%
Other forms of abuse	6	1%
No information given	7	1%
Total	601	100%

A majority of women had either never left their abusers prior to this occasion, or had left once before, only. See Table 27.

Table 27: How many times has she left her abuser?		
Has she left her abuser before?	Number of women	%
Yes, left once before	139	23%
Yes, left twice before	65	11%
Yes, left more than twice before	57	9%
Yes, but don't know how many times previously	35	6%
No, never left abuser before	228	38%
Don't know whether she has left before	53	9%
Does not apply - never in relationship with abuser	24	4%
Total	601	100%

The largest single number of women (16% of the sample) referred themselves to refuge accommodation. Housing and homeless persons' departments also referred quite a high proportion: 14% of the sample came to refuges via this route. Apart from this, a large number of different agencies referred women to refuge accommodation.

Table 28: Referral to refuge		
Who referred her to your organisation?	Number of women	%
Another service within your organisation	34	6%
National Domestic Violence Helpline	37	6%
Other WA local service	57	9%
IDVA employed by another organisation	14	2%
ISVA employed by another organisation	2	0.3%
Other specialist DV or SV service	53	9%
Police	58	9%
NHS primary care	9	1%
Hospital	4	1%
Housing/homeless persons' dept	86	14%
Other housing provider	11	2%
Social services/social care	60	10%
Victim Support	4	1%
Voluntary sector - other	39	6%
Self referral	99	16%
Other - please state below	23	4%
DK/No information given	11	2%
Total	601	97%

Apart from agencies which referred women to refuge accommodation, a number of other agencies were approached for help and support, either before or after women arrived at the refuge. (See Table 29 overleaf.) Among the other agencies offering support to one or two women (but not listed) were: Homestart, Foyer, a local women's centre, the probation service, schools, the Sojourner Project and Sure Start. Only 25 women (4%) were known to have sought help from on-line support services such as Netmums or the Women's Aid Survivors' Forum.

5.3: The police and the prosecution process: Refuge residents

The majority of women residents had at some point called the police because of the domestic violence: 70% (414 women) were known to have reported the abuse to the police on at least one occasion. The majority of these did *not* report the abuse the first time it occurred, but more typically did so after they had been assaulted between three and five times; and a substantial minority experiencing more than ten assaults before they called the police (see Table 30). Those who did report the violence to the police at all, often did so on a number of occasions: see Table 31, which shows that – excluding those cases where no information is available – more than half (55%) of those women who called the police did so more than once.

Which other agency did she approach²⁵?	Number of women
Another service within your organisation	7
National Domestic Violence Helpline	10
Other WA local service	7
IDVA employed by another organisation	7
Other specialist DV or SV service	5
Police	43
NHS primary care	10
Hospital	2
Housing/homeless persons' dept	17
Other housing provider	3
Social services/social care	24
Victim Support	2
Voluntary sector - other	10
More than one other agency	52
Other	6
DK/No information given	56
Not applicable - did not contact any other agency	340

Number of times assaulted before reporting to police	Number of women
Reported on first occasion	57
Reported on 2nd occasion	33
Reported after 3-5 assaults	101
Reported after 6-10 assaults	39
Reported after more than 10 assaults	84
DK/No information	128
Never reported to police	159
Total	601

Number of times reported to police	Number of women
Once only	152
Reported twice	69
Reported between 3 and 5 times	83
Between 6 and 10 times	18
More than 10 times	16
No information on number of times	76
Never reported to police	157
DK whether reported to police or not	30

²⁵ This does not include any agency which referred the woman to refuge accommodation.

Of those who had reported offences to the police at least once, the vast majority (313) said the perpetrator was not currently being prosecuted and a further 21 informants did not know. The perpetrators of 80 of the selected residents had recently gone through the prosecution process, and a further 75 had been prosecuted in the past – 155 women in all (26% of the total number of residents in the sample.) In 64 of these cases, the prosecution was successful; i.e. the perpetrator was convicted. The conviction rate is therefore 41% of those who had been prosecuted, 15% of those who had ever reported domestic violence offences to the police, but only 10% of the whole sample.

5.4: Protection under civil legislation: Refuge residents

One in five women included in the Residents' Survey had applied for either a non-molestation order or an occupation order (or both) under the Family Law Act 1996, and 12% had applied for a restraining order under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. See Tables 32 and 33 below. 42 women had applied for orders under both pieces of legislation, meaning that a total of 152 women had applied for at least one kind of order.

Table 32: Injunctions applied for: Residents' Survey

Has she applied for an injunction or protection order?	Number of women	%
Yes	122	20%
No	421	70%
DK	58	10%
Total	601	100%

Table 33: Restraining order applied for: Residents' Survey

Has she applied for a restraining order?	Number of women	%
Yes	72	12%
No	428	71%
DK	101	17%
Total	601	100%

In 53 of the above cases, (one-third) at least one order had been breached²⁶; in 13 cases the order had not yet been made; and in 50 cases the respondent did not know whether the order had been breached or not.

5.5: Referral to MARACs: Refuge residents

MARACs are primarily intended for victims judged to be at high risk following a risk assessment and are aimed at reducing repeat victimisation: relevant agencies share information, provide safety measures and increased police protection, and refer the victim to services that can address her support needs.

²⁶ 29 non-molestation orders, 2 occupation orders, 14 restraining orders. In a further 5 cases, more than one order was breached, and in 3 cases, the respondent did not know what kind of order it was.

We asked respondents whether the selected survivors had ever been referred to a MARAC, and if so, who had referred them and what action resulted from the referral. 114 women (19% of the sample of refuge residents) had been referred to a MARAC, most often by the responding organisation, or by the police. See Table 34.

Agency referring client to MARAC	Number of women referred
Responding organisation	59
Police	28
Social care	3
IDVA or ISVA from another organisation	8
Housing/homeless persons dept	4
Another specialist DV/SV service	3
Other - please state	6
DK/No information	3
Not referred to MARAC	431
DK/No information	56

The actions following referral were varied, but often quite minimal, and in many cases, no action was given – either because the respondent did not know, or because nothing had (yet) been done. In three cases, it was termed an “information only referral”. In 13 cases, refuge accommodation was found for the victim and her children²⁷, and in six further cases, other alternative housing was provided; in three cases, child protection proceedings were begun. Court proceedings (prosecution or civil protection) was recommended in three cases, and in two further cases, the property was “tagged” to try to ensure a rapid response by the police if further incidents were reported²⁸.

Finally, Table 35 below gives the previous housing tenure of those women included in the Residents’ Survey.

Form of tenure prior to refuge	Number of women	%
Local authority tenant	87	14%
Housing association or other RSL	91	15%
Private landlord	139	23%
Hostel, refuge or other temporary accommodation	50	8%
Staying with friends or family	110	18%
Owner occupier - sole owner	15	2%
Owner occupier - joint owner	43	7%
Other	39	6%
DK/No information	27	4%

²⁷ Presumably prior to, and probably resulting in, the woman becoming resident in the responding organisation’s refuge.

²⁸ Presumably prior to the woman taking up residence in refuge accommodation – the implication being that the tagging had not been effective in preventing future violence.

5.7: Women using non-refuge services

Data were supplied on 940 women service users, a one in four sample of those using non-refuge-based domestic and sexual violence services during the week beginning 7th June 2010. The women were using a variety of services, provided by 145 separate organisations, including floating support, resettlement, drop-in services, support groups of various kinds, advocacy (often provided through an IDVA), support services linked to a perpetrator programme for their abusers, one-to-one counselling and general outreach services. A number of women (22%) were using more than one service. The length of time women had been using services also varied: see Tables 36 and 37 below.

Which non-refuge service is she using?	Number of women	% of total
Outreach service	276	29%
Floating support	149	16%
Drop-in	40	4%
Support group	34	4%
Resettlement service	55	6%
IDVA	110	12%
ISVA	2	0.2%
Women's support service linked to perpetrator programme	7	0.7%
Other non-refuge-based service	59	6%
More than one service	204	22%
No information given on which service	4	0.4%

How long has she been using this service?	Number of women	% of total
This is her first time	20	2%
Up to 2 weeks	30	3%
2 - 3 weeks	49	5%
3 - 4 weeks	51	5%
4 - 5 weeks	56	6%
5 - 6 weeks	29	3%
6 - 7 weeks	34	4%
7 - 8 weeks	32	3%
8 - 12 weeks	137	15%
13 - 17 weeks	92	10%
4 months - 5 months	60	6%
5 - 6 months	54	6%
6 months to 1 year	151	16%
More than 1 year	113	12%
DK/No information given	32	3%

A variety of organisations were named as referring (or in some cases signposting) women to the service they were currently using (see Table 38 overleaf). The police were the agency responsible for most referrals (21%),

followed by another service within the same specialist domestic violence organisation (14%). (This would often be a referral to resettlement or outreach services, at the point a woman was moving on from a refuge into her own accommodation.) Self-referral was, however, the most common route into non-refuge services, used by 25% of the women.

Table 38: Agency referring women to non-refuge-based service		
Which agency referred her to your service?	Number of women	% of women referred from this source
Another service within your organisation	135	14%
National Domestic Violence Helpline	9	1%
Other WA local service	30	3%
IDVA employed by another organisation	43	5%
ISVA employed by another organisation	2	0.2%
Other specialist DV or SV service	30	3%
Police	196	21%
NHS primary care professional	47	5%
Hospital	1	0.1%
Housing/Homeless persons' dept (local authority)	27	3%
Other housing provider (e.g. housing association or private landlord)	7	0.7%
Social services/Social care	66	7%
Victim Support	13	1%
Other voluntary sector	37	4%
Self-referral	234	25%
Other	53	6%
Not known/ No information given by respondent	10	1%

102 women (11% of the sample) were using another specialist domestic or sexual violence service and 40 women (4%) were known to have sought support from on-line forums or websites such as the Women's Aid Survivors' Forum or Netmums. Just over one in four of the women had stayed in refuge accommodation at some point, the majority of these using a refuge run by the organisation which also provided the non-refuge-based service they were currently using. See Table 39 below.

Table 39: Women who had previously stayed in a refuge		
Has she ever stayed in a refuge?	Number of women	% of sample
Yes - stayed in refuge run by same organisation	156	17%
Yes - stayed in refuge run by another organisation	96	10%
Yes - stayed in refuge but don't know which organisation	3	0.3%
No - never stayed in a refuge	618	66%
DK - no information given	67	7%

5.8: Demographic characteristics of women using non-refuge services

See Tables 40, 41 and 42 below for a summary of the ethnic origins, ages and sexual orientations of the selected women using non-refuge based domestic and sexual violence services.

Ethnic origin	Number of women	% of total
White British	607	65%
White Irish	15	2%
Other White background	32	3%
White and Black Caribbean	14	1%
White and Black African	7	0.7%
White and Asian	6	0.6%
Any other mixed background	7	0.7%
Indian	26	3%
Pakistani	77	8%
Bangladeshi	20	2%
Any other Asian background	18	2%
Black Caribbean	25	3%
Black African	39	4%
Any other Black background	9	1%
Chinese	4	0.4%
Traveller community	4	0.4%
Any other ethnic group	30	3%

Ages	Number of women	% of total sample
16 - 20 yrs	58	6%
21- 25 yrs	135	14%
26 - 30 yrs	156	17%
31 - 35 yrs	193	21%
36 - 40 yrs	143	15%
41 - 45 yrs	95	10%
46 - 50 yrs	70	7%
51 - 55 yrs	26	3%
56 - 60 yrs	20	2%
61 - 65 yrs	9	1%
66 yrs and over	12	1%
No information given	23	2%

Sexual orientation	Number of women	% of sample
Lesbian	15	2%
Bisexual	15	2%
Heterosexual	852	91%
Not asked	53	6%
No information given	5	0.5%

The above table shows that the vast majority of women – more than 90% - were said to be heterosexual (though a substantial proportion of respondents said they did not ask their clients this question). None of the women was identified as transgender – though again respondents often said they did not ask this.

Three quarters of those using non-refuge services had children under 16, the majority of whom were living with them: only 45 women are known both to have children under the age of 16, but not be living with any of them – though in quite a number of cases, the respondent did not know how many (if any) of the woman’s children lived with her. See Tables 43 and 44 below. Thirty-six women were currently pregnant, 10 of whom did not yet have any children.

Table 43: How many children does woman have in total?

How many children aged 16yrs or under	Number of women
1 child 16 yrs or under	263
2 children	222
3 children	112
4 children	50
5 children	26
6 children	4
7 children	2
No children of 16 yrs or under	200
No information whether she has children or not	40
DK how many children she has	21

Table 44: How many children are living with her?

How many children aged 16 yrs or under are living with woman?	Number of women
1 child of 16yrs or under living with her	245
2 children living with her	193
3 children with her	88
4 children with her	39
5 children with her	23
6 children with her	4
Has children, but none are living with her	45
No children of 16 yrs or under at all	200
No information on number of children with her	103

Just over one-quarter of the women using non-refuge services were disabled – a slightly higher proportion than our sample of residents. This could be an indication of greater accessibility of non-refuge-based services, and the fact that for women with adapted accommodation and/or care packages, moving away from home is often problematic²⁹. A majority of disabled women had mental health impairments, over half of which were a direct result of the abuse they experienced. Table 45 overleaf gives information on the number of disabled women using non-refuge-based services, and identifies the proportion whose impairments resulted from the abuse they had experienced.

²⁹ See Hague, G. et al. (2008) *Making the links* (Bristol: Women’s Aid)

Table 45: Women who are disabled: Non-refuge services

Form of impairment, if any	Number of women	% of women	Number of women whose impairments are the result of abuse	% for whom impairments result from abuse
No impairments	698	74%	n/a	n/a
Physical impairment	50	5%	13	26%
Sensory impairment	12	1%	4	25%
Mental health impairment	123	13%	88	72%
Learning impairment	19	2%	0	0%
Other impairment	10	1%	2	20%
Multiple impairments	28	3%	14	50%

5.9: Experiences of abuse: Users of non-refuge services

The vast majority of women in our Service Users' survey had experienced abuse from a heterosexual partner; in addition to the 77% of women for whom this was the major or only form of abuse they experienced, many of those citing multiple forms of abuse included heterosexual partner abuse within that. See Table 46 below.

Table 46: Kinds of abuse experienced

Form of abuse	Number of women	% women experiencing this
Heterosexual partner abuse	726	77%
Same-sex partner abuse	9	1%
Abuse from other household members	34	4%
Forced marriage	1	0.1%
Honour-based violence	1	0.1%
Rape or sexual assault	14	1%
Trafficking or sexual exploitation	1	0.1%
Multiple forms of abuse	138	15%
Other forms of abuse	3	0.3%
No information on abuse experienced	13	1%

While the majority of service users (78%) were no longer with the perpetrators of the abuse, there were some women (10% of the sample) who still lived with their abusers, and a smaller number who – while no longer (or never) cohabiting - still maintained a relationship with him or her. See Table 47.

The length of time women had stayed with the abusers varied from less than a year to ten years or more. 220 women (23%) were known to have stayed with the perpetrator for more than 10 years, some older women remaining for as long as 30 or 40 years (a few of whom were still with the abusers). On the other hand, 40% had left the abuser within the first 5 years. See Table 48 overleaf.

Table 47: Is the woman still with her abuser?		
Is she still with her abuser?	Number of women	% of all women in sample
Yes, still lives with him/her	94	10%
Yes - but does NOT live with him/her	59	6%
No	730	78%
DK/ No information	29	3%
Does not apply - never in relationship with abuser	28	3%

Table 48: Length of time with abuser			
How long was she in this abusive relationship?	Number of women		% of sample
Up to 3 months	5	Up to 5 years: 338 women	40%
3 - 6 months	13		
6 months to 1 year	30		
Between 1 and 2 yrs	73		
Between 2 and 3 yrs	88		
Between 3 and 4 yrs	68		
Between 4 and 5 yrs	61		
More than 5 years up to 10 yrs	216		23%
10 - 15years	110		12%
16 – 20 years	54		6%
21 - 25 years	23		2%
26 - 30yrs	17		2%
31 - 35 years	6		0.6%
36 - 40years	5		0.5%
41- 45 years	3		0.3%
46 - 50 years	2		0.2%
DK/No information	137		15%
Does not apply - never in relationship with abuser	29		3%

5.10: Police and prosecution: Users of non-refuge services

Domestic and sexual abuse includes many kinds of behaviour that are not in themselves criminal, but we were interested in how many occasions criminal behaviour was perpetrated before the police were called. The majority of women (73%) had reported violence to the police at least once, though only a minority did so after the first assault, and more than 40% did not report it until after three or more assaults. (See Table 49 overleaf) Table 50 shows how many times the police have been called.

47% of all perpetrators (445 individuals) have **never** been prosecuted for a domestic violence offence; this constitutes 65% of those whose offences have been reported to the police at least once. See Table 51 for the numbers of prosecutions both currently and previously. The numbers of convictions are considerably lower – see Table 52: only 15% of the perpetrators have ever been convicted of a domestic violence offence.

Table 49: How many assaults before reporting to police		
How many times she was assaulted before calling police	Number of women	% of sample
Reported to police on FIRST occasion	71	8%
Reported on SECOND occasion	48	5%
Reported after 3 - 5 assaults	126	13%
Reported after 6 - 10 assaults	87	9%
Reported after MORE THAN 10 assaults	187	20%
DK/ No information on number of assaults	260	28%
Never reported to police	161	17%

Table 50: How many times the police were called		
How many times have offences been reported to police?	Number of women	% of sample
Once only	195	21%
Reported twice	113	12%
Reported between 3 and 5 times	168	18%
Reported between 6 and 10 times	58	6%
Reported more than 10 times	42	4%
DK how many times reported to police	117	13%
NEVER reported to police	161	17%
No information	86	9%

Table 51: Prosecution proceedings				
	Current prosecution	% current prosecution	Previous prosecution	% previous prosecution
Yes	197	21%	206	22%
No	631	67%	551	59%
Don't know	112	12%	183	19%

Table 52: Has perpetrator ever been convicted?		
Convictions	Number of women	% of sample
Yes, perpetrator HAS been convicted previously	137	15%
Proceedings still ongoing	33	3%
No, perpetrator has NEVER been convicted	139	15%
Perpetrator NEVER PROSECUTED for DV offence	445	47%
DK/No information	186	20%

5. 11: Other court proceedings

Only a minority of women (275 – 29% of the sample using non-refuge services) were known to have applied for an injunction under the Family Law Act 1996. Restraining orders were used even less frequently: in only 137 instances (15% of the sample) were the perpetrators known to have been subject to restraining orders under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. Of those cases where an order has already been made (255 cases), 48% of the orders - nearly half - appear to have been breached; and in a number of

cases, the informants did not know whether the order had been breached or not, meaning that the proportion could in fact have exceeded 50%.

Have any court orders ever been BREACHED?	Number		% of the 255 orders made
Yes, NON-MOLESTATION ORDER has been breached	79	122 breaches in total	48% of all orders made were breached
Yes, OCCUPATION ORDER has been breached	2		
Yes, RESTRAINING ORDER has been breached	23		
An order was breached, but don't know which kind	21		
More than one kind of order has been breached	18		
DK whether order breached or not	59		23% of orders
Order not yet made - does not apply	22		9%
No, NONE has been breached	111		44% of orders
Does not apply - no order EVER applied for	492		n/a
No information on whether order ever applied for	113		n/a

5.12: Referral to MARACs: Non-refuge service users

One-third of the sample of women using non-refuge services had been referred to their local MARAC. This was a somewhat higher proportion than that for women currently resident in refuge accommodation. This difference may be because once a woman has fled to a refuge, she is judged to be at less immediate risk, and/or is currently getting adequate support from the staff in the refuge organisation.

Has woman been referred to MARAC?	Number of women	% of sample
Yes	315	34%
No	560	60%
DK whether referred to MARAC or not	65	7%

The referral organisation was most often either the domestic violence organisation currently supporting the woman and responding to the survey, or the police: these two agencies accounted for more than 80% of all MARAC referrals. With the exception of IDVAs and ISVAs, other agencies almost never referred women to MARACs – see Table 55 overleaf.

The actions taken after referral to MARAC were often not known by the responding organisation – 163 respondents (i.e. in more than half of all cases referred to MARAC) either said they didn't know or left this space blank – or the case had been referred but not yet discussed (13 cases). Where action had been taken, this was often quite varied and extensive, and in some cases, involved a number of different agencies. For example:

Address flagged, housed in local hostel, police conducted risk assessment, children's schools made aware of the situation. [667]

Children and Young People's Services, IDVA and Domestic Abuse Officer to visit to discuss protecting children, and housing options. Housing to discuss case with her housing officer. IDVA to do safety planning, provide information on family law and civil options, and to update MARAC. MARAC to liaise with IDVA and case to be monitored. [192]

Fire alarms, locks on letterbox, referred to respondent specialist domestic violence organisation. Appointment with housing dept – unsuccessful. [72]

Housing to follow up allocation of accommodation, IDVA to follow up criminal matters. Social Services to do an initial assessment, outreach to continue support. [62]

IDVA to report continuous breaches to police, and to support at court (breach of bail conditions). IDVA, housing and police to support with re-housing. Panic alarm to be fixed to property and sig marker attached. [587]

Victim Support commissioned a cordless phone & answer machine. BCD offered full outreach support, housing appointment, requested & implemented target hardening, panic alarm installed. Safeguarding Adult Unit has chased up harassment offence. [3932]

In other cases, safety plans were to be drawn up, Sanctuary schemes were implemented, other safety measures were taken, and in a number of cases, the woman and her children were re-housed. Sometimes, the action to be taken was not specified but the woman was referred (or referred back) to the specialist domestic or sexual violence agency and/or the IDVA or ISVA for continuing support.

Agency	Number of women	% of all referrals (315 women) coming via this route
Referred by respondent organisation	138	44%
Police	116	37%
Health professional	5	2%
Social care	3	1%
IDVA/ISVA employed by another organisation	32	10%
Another specialist DV/SV service	8	3%
Other - please state	5	2%
No information on which agency referred	8	3%
Not referred to MARAC	560	n/a
DK whether referred to MARAC or not	65	n/a

5.13: Current accommodation of non-refuge service users

The majority of service users were currently in rented accommodation of various kinds. See Table 56, which gives both the current tenure of each of the women in the sample and whether or not she is looking for alternative

accommodation. Currently, just under one-third of the women were looking for alternative accommodation.

Table 56: Current tenure and looking for alternatives

Current tenure	Yes, looking for alternative accommodation	No, not looking for alternatives	Don't know/no information	Total women
Council tenant	39	156	12	207
Housing association tenancy/other RSL	42	135	10	187
Private landlord	73	128	7	208
Hostel, refuge or temporary accommodation	39	6	0	45
Staying with friends or family	56	15	6	77
Owner occupier - sole owner	10	55	4	69
Owner occupier - joint owner	20	51	6	77
Other - please state	5	12	2	19
DK what tenure	3	6	42	51
Totals	287	564	89	940

6: Conclusion

Women's Aid's 2009-10 Annual Survey was based on responses from voluntary sector organisations providing specialist support services (including refuge accommodation) to women and children experiencing domestic and sexual violence. 226 out of 341 eligible organisations responded to at least one section of the survey – a response rate of 66% overall, rising to 82% of those organisations which provide a variety of refuge-based and non-refuge-based services.

The results of this survey indicate that the domestic and sexual violence sector in England continues to provide a wide range of both refuge and non-refuge based services, giving help and support to large numbers of women and children annually. In 2009-10, an estimated 124, 895 women and 54, 370 children were provided with one or more forms of support following domestic and/or sexual violence. 17, 615 women and 17, 785 children were provided with refuge accommodation, and the remainder with other forms of outreach, advocacy, counselling and support. A further 69, 320 children and young people were supported indirectly as a result of their mothers using outreach and other non-refuge services. These figures indicate an increase in the number of women and children supported in both refuge accommodation and by non-refuge-based services compared to last year.

The numbers of women and children resident in refuge accommodation on the Day to Count are very similar to those resident on typical days in 2009 and in 2007 and represent an 80% occupancy rate overall. On the same day, an estimated 285 women and their children seeking accommodation in a refuge were turned away – the majority of these because the refuge was full. This indicates that there was little or no available capacity in many areas for other women and children needing safe emergency accommodation, until some of the existing residents moved on. Overall, the total number of refuge spaces across England constitutes only 75% of the number of places needed, based on the estimate of one family place per 10, 000 population³⁰.

From the annual figures, the number of women and children with no recourse to public funds that are being financially supported for a temporary period in refuge accommodation appears to have risen, although the proportion of

³⁰ In 1986, the European Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities said one refuge space should be available per 10,000 inhabitants, and this has generally been accepted in the UK and across Europe as the minimum necessary. See for example, Quilgars, Deborah and Pleace, Nicholas (2010) *Meeting the needs of households at risk of domestic violence in England: The role of accommodation and housing-related support services* (London: Department for Communities and Local Government); Logar, Rosa (2006) *Bridging gaps: From good intentions to good co-operation* (Vienna: WAVE Co-ordination Office); WAVE Co-ordination Office (2004) *Away from violence: Guidelines for setting up and running a women's refuge* (Vienna: WAVE).

refuge residents with no recourse remains the same, both annually (3%) and on the Day to Count (6%).

From the Day to Count, 12% of women resident in refuges were said to be disabled, though a higher proportion was included in the Service Users' Feedback surveys: these indicated that approximately 22% of women supported in refuge accommodation and 26% of those using non-refuge-based services were disabled. These proportions are very similar to last year's figures. Over half the disabled women attributed their impairments to the abuse they had experienced, and this was particularly so for those who experienced mental health issues.

A variety of organisations refer women and children to domestic violence services; in particular, other Women's Aid organisations and the National Domestic Violence Helpline, and – particularly in regard to referral to refuge accommodation - local authority homelessness departments and social care services. However, it seems that health professionals are still, statistically, among those least likely to refer women. The largest single group of women referred themselves to the service: 16% of women resident in refuge accommodation and 25% of women using non-refuge services.

From the Service Users' surveys, it is apparent that, as in previous years, many women have remained with their abusers for a very long time. This is particularly the case with women using non-refuge services, more than one in five of whom have stayed for more than 10 years in the abusive relationship. 10% of women using these services still live with their abusers, and a further 6% - while not currently sharing a home - have an ongoing relationship with them. Of those resident in refuge accommodation, nearly 40% said they had never left their abusers before.

More than two-thirds (70%) of the women resident in refuge accommodation on June 10th 2010 and 83% of those using non-refuge services during the week beginning June 7th had asked the police for help on at least one occasion. This is a slightly higher proportion than last year. The proportion of cases in which prosecution proceedings have recently been taken has risen to 26% of refuge residents³¹ (from last year's 16%) and 21% of women using non-refuge services – and a further 12% of perpetrators have been prosecuted in the past. However, only 10% of partners of women resident in refuges and 15% of the partners of women using non-refuge services have ever been convicted of a domestic violence offence³².

The proportion of those applying for or obtaining civil injunctions has risen for women in refuge accommodation to 20% (from 16% last year), but stayed approximately the same for women using non-refuge services (29% compared to last year's 31%). Restraining orders are used even less often – but again are applied for slightly more often by women using non-refuge services: 15% of this sample compared to 12% of women in refuge

³¹ This is back to the same proportion as in 2007

³² In a small number of cases, proceedings are still ongoing.

accommodation. As before, between one-third and one-half of all court orders was known to have been breached on at least one occasion.

These figures indicate that, although use of the criminal justice process has generally increased over the past few years – particularly among women who are not currently in refuge accommodation – it is still used only by a minority of women, and usually only after they have experienced repeated abuse, often over a number of years. Also, by itself, the criminal justice process cannot guarantee women’s safety; nor is it appropriate for all situations.

The additional questions on MARACs produced a mixed response: whereas some respondents saw these multi-agency forums as useful and effective, others thought the amount of time they took up on administration and attendance was not justified by the results – particularly as they were almost never funded for this work.

Continued funding for services was in any case of considerable concern for some respondents; and these concerns will have become still greater as a result of the government spending review and forthcoming cuts in local authority budgets.

Taken as a whole, the evidence provided from these surveys reinforces the importance of the specialist services provided by Women’s Aid’s network of local voluntary sector organisations. The provision of specialist accommodation for victims of domestic and sexual violence, together with outreach, advocacy and other support services, is crucial to the safety and well-being of many abused women and children.