

Women's Aid data on domestic abuse service provision

Introduction

Women's Aid collects data on domestic abuse services, the women and children who use them and the level of provision on an on-going basis. We have five key sources of ongoing data collection which allow us to build up a picture of the domestic abuse sector nationally.

These data sources are:

- **Routes to Support**, the UK violence against women and girls database of service and refuge vacancies run in partnership by Scottish Women's Aid, Welsh Women's Aid, Women's Aid Federation of England and Women's Aid Federation of Northern Ireland. This includes additional data on vacancies from London refuges
- **On Track**, our case management and outcomes monitoring database used by over 40 local service providers throughout England which provides information on women's experiences of abuse, support offered by services and outcomes achieved.
- The Women's Aid **Annual Survey** of domestic abuse services which provides insight into the challenges services face throughout the year and information on the women they support.
- The **No Woman Turned Away Project** which is a frontline intervention supporting women who were unable to access refuge and provides us with valuable data on barriers women face when trying to flee to refuge.
- **Femicide Census**, which has been developed by Karen Ingala Smith, Chief Executive of nia, in partnership with Women's Aid, with support from Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP and Deloitte LLP. The Femicide Census is a database currently containing information on almost one thousand women killed by men in England and Wales since 2009.

Below are some of our latest data on the landscape of domestic abuse services, including refuges. The Government are currently consulting on a new model of funding for supported housing and we hope that the model announced will ensure the future sustainability of vital refuge services.

Information on services throughout England and change over time (since 2010)

- Number of services delivering each type of intervention throughout England between 2010 and 2017 including regional breakdown.
- Number of refuge bed spaces available throughout England between 2010 and 2017 including regional breakdown.
- Previous location of women entering refuge in London between 2014 and 2017.

What this information doesn't show

These numbers considered in isolation do not give a full picture of available domestic abuse provision. Total numbers do not show the challenges services face in a climate of funding instability and cuts which lead to a reduction in staffing, organisations running part of their service without dedicated funding, loss of support such as interpreter services, evening cover or counselling services.

The number of refuge bed spaces has risen over the period shown, though we should note that the population has also risen. Further, not all spaces are available to all women. Availability of spaces will depend on a number of factors including the number of children a woman has with her, whether she has any access needs, whether she has any specific support needs around substance use or mental health and whether she has access to benefits due to her age or immigration status.

This 'hidden' impact can be seen when we look into service provision in more detail as shown by these data from the 2017 Women's Aid Annual Survey of domestic abuse services.

Hidden impact of cuts

- 60% of total referrals to responding refuge services in 2016/17 were declined for any reason. (Women's Aid Annual Survey 2017)
- 60% of responding services (69 responses) cited funding as the most challenging issue they faced in 2016/17. (Women's Aid Annual Survey 2017)
- Out of 118 responding domestic abuse organisations, 11.9% received no local authority funding. 20.3% of the responding organisations received 25% or less of their funding from the local authority. (Women's Aid Annual Survey 2017)

- 45.5% of responding organisations (56 services out of 132) were running an area of work without any dedicated funding during the previous financial year. Six of these 56 services had received no local authority funding at all in 2016/17. (Women's Aid Annual Survey 2017) Dedicated providers (those organisations solely running domestic abuse services) were more likely to be running an area of work without any dedicated funding. This may be due to the fact that other providers have more than one area of work and are therefore likely to withdraw completely from domestic abuse support when they lose out on a contract to concentrate on other parts of their organisation. Dedicated providers are more likely to try to continue running vital services without funding.
- 68.4% of women in resident in refuge services on the Day to Count 2017 (the census day) had come from a different local authority area. (Women's Aid Annual Survey 2017). Data from London refuges tells us that 86.9% of women they placed in refuge during 2016-17 came from a different local authority.
- 94 women with 90 children were turned away refuge services on the Day to Count (census day). (Women's Aid Annual Survey, 2017)

Service types and refuge spaces available in England

The following data are from snapshots taken in May each year and do not show fluctuations in number during the year. They show net change only and do not reflect the number of services changing providers as part of the commissioning process.

No two women take the same journey to recovery, some may never access specialist services at all. For those who do access services their journey may take them through multiple service types over a different lengths of time.

It is therefore vital that women, wherever they live, are able to access a full range of information, advocacy and support services to meet their needs.

Graphs One and Two below show us the number of services providing refuge and community-based services in England between 2010 and 2017, with a full breakdown of all service types in Table One. Table Two shows us the regional breakdown at May 2017.

For refuge services data on the number of spaces can give us an idea of capacity over time. The national picture is shown in Graph Three with a regional breakdown in Table Three. As already mentioned, availability of spaces for individual women depends on a number of factors including size of family, geographical location of vacancies and the

needs of the woman (and any children) seeking refuge. We know that demand for refuge spaces continues to be higher than the availability, an issue explored in detail in **“Nowhere to Turn”** [<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/research-and-publications/nowomanturnedaway/>] which uses findings from Women’s Aid’s **No Woman Turned Away** project.

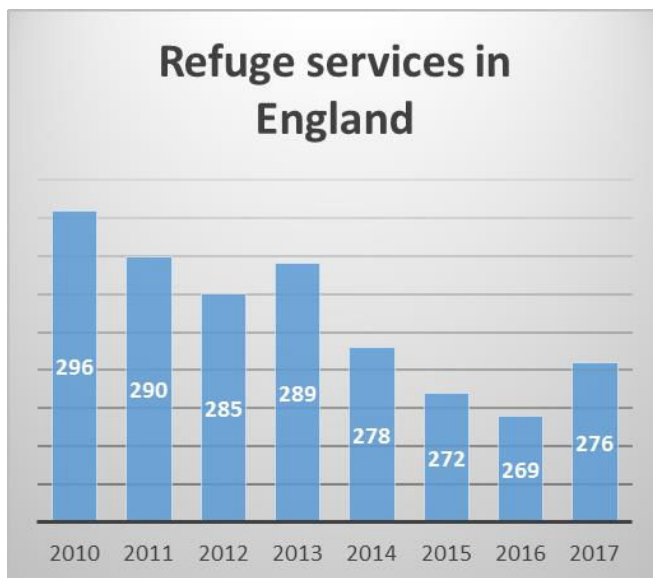
Women’s journeys to find refuge

Women seeking refuge typically look outside of their own local authority area for safety reasons. The 2017 annual survey findings show that about two thirds of women (68.4%) in refuge on the Day to Count had crossed local authority boundaries to access refuge. ¹

Data from London refuges provide us with the local authority of origin for women placed in their refuge services. This gives us an insight into the journeys women make to access refuge showing that the vast majority, 86.9% in 2016-17, travel to another local authority area. These data do not show the number of women leaving London to find refuge elsewhere which may be higher than the number of women from outside London being placed in refuge there.

¹ If a woman’s own local authority area is a large geographical area, she may be able to safely stay in the same local authority area.

Graph One: numbers of refuge services in England



Graph Two: Community-based services in England

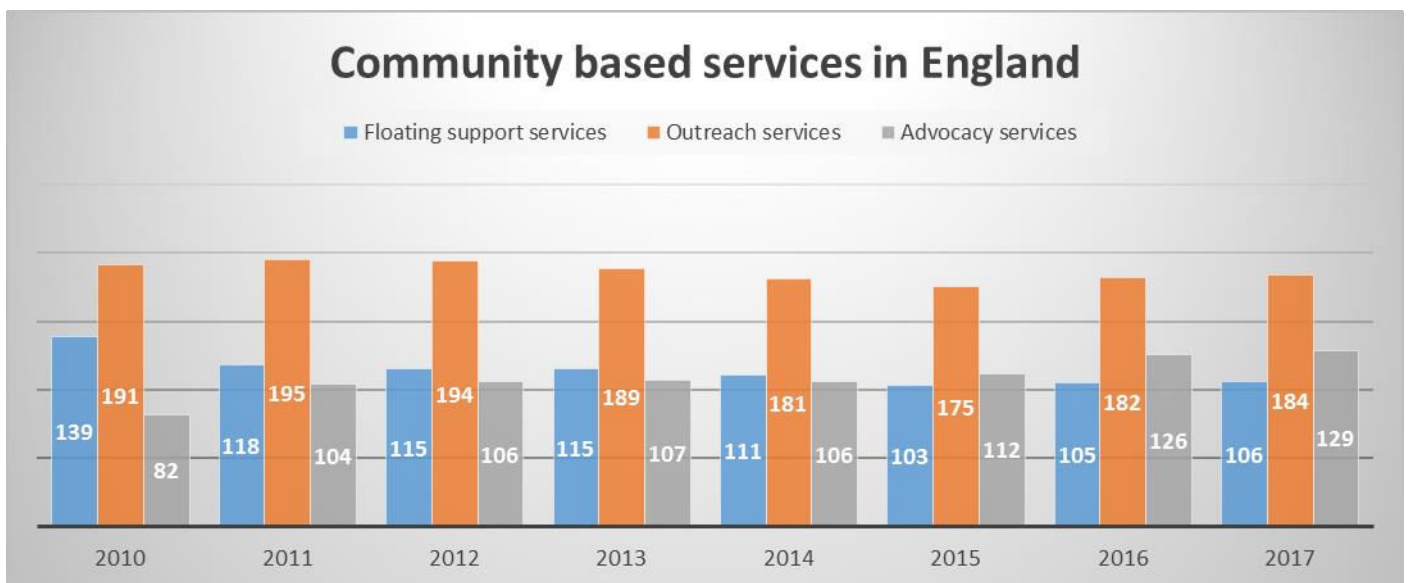


Table One: All service types in England over time

Year	Refuge	floating support	helpline	outreach	project based services (e.g. drop-in, counselling)	DV Advocacy service	Dedicated children/young people's service	Resettlement
2017	276	106	115	184	137	129	190	216
2016	269	105	110	182	130	126	190	209
2015	272	103	83	175	128	112	187	212
2014	278	111	77	181	130	106	189	224
2013	289	115	78	189	132	107	203	240
2012	285	115	76	194	139	106	207	246
2011	290	118	78	195	135	104	209	258
2010	296	139	79	191	138	82	238	270

Table Two: Regional breakdown at May 2017

May-17	Refuge	floating support	helpline	outreach	project based	IDVA/DAPA	ISVA	CYPS	Resettlement
Channel Islands	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	2
East Midlands	24	8	8	17	13	10	5	18	14
East of England	26	7	4	15	11	5	3	15	17
London	60	26	17	27	30	23	6	38	47
North East	18	2	5	10	8	9	2	13	14
North West	32	12	20	29	24	20	3	25	26
South East	42	15	19	25	17	20	2	30	35
South West	22	8	12	16	11	11	2	17	21
West Midlands	28	18	11	20	15	16	6	15	23
Yorkshire & Humberside	22	9	16	22	7	14	6	17	17
UK Wide/Multiple regions	0	1	2	1	1	1	0	2	0
Grand Total	276	106	115	184	137	129	35	190	216

Graph Three: Refuges spaces by year

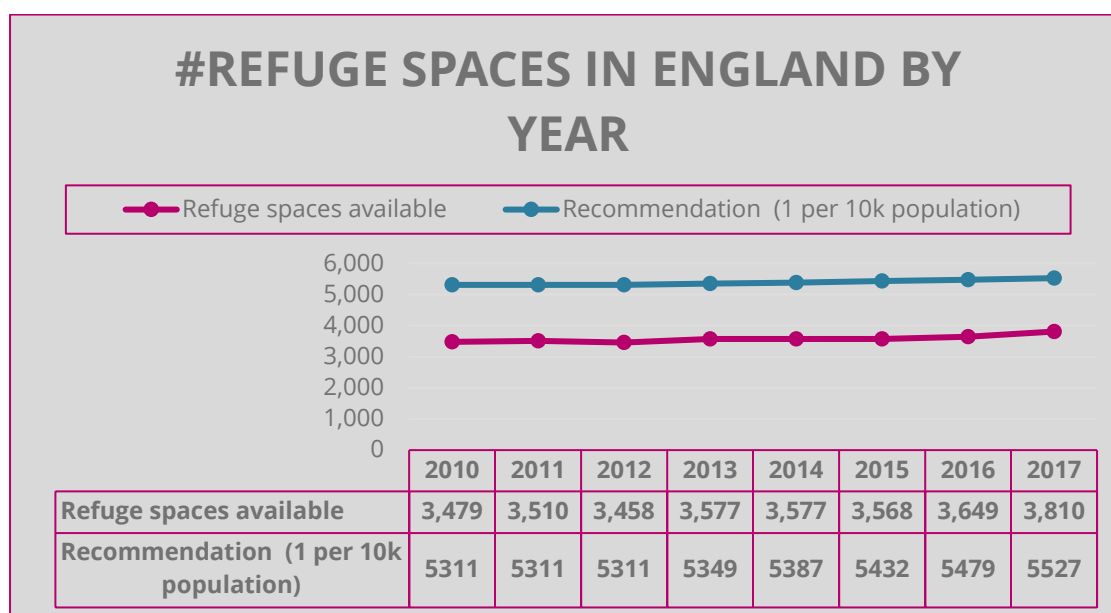
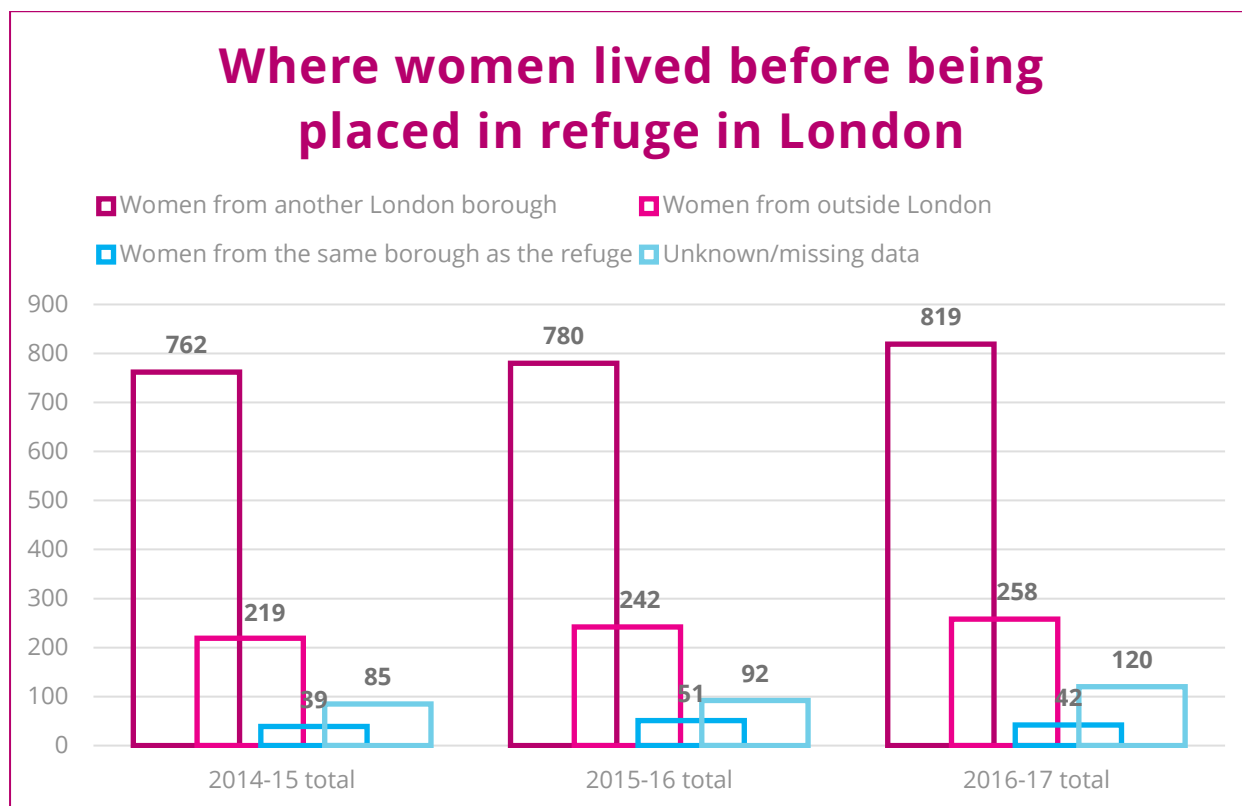


Table Three: regional breakdown of refuge spaces over time

Region	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Channel Islands	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
East Midlands	270	277	270	266	283	271	271	297
East of England	293	324	325	400	406	414	402	427
Greater London Authority	798	756	722	793	799	815	812	854
North East	158	159	159	159	168	168	175	183
North West	334	403	379	371	406	402	407	413
South East	596	562	565	506	509	503	507	538
South West	327	323	323	320	240	227	266	275
West Midlands	441	443	444	424	423	433	457	477
Yorkshire and The Humber	250	251	259	326	331	323	340	334
Total spaces available	3479	3510	3458	3577	3577	3568	3649	3810

Graph Four: Previous location of women in London refuges



Some comments from services²:

"...we have experienced unprecedented levels of demand and survivors presenting with increasingly complex needs but insufficient support worker resources to provide other than crisis-response support or support for much longer than 12 weeks."

"The most challenging issue our service faced in 2016/17 was funding and cuts which led to loss of experienced staff and lower capacity to deliver a safe service."

[Most challenging issue in 2016/17]: "securing existing funding, along with maintaining staff whilst that decision was made. Resulting in loss of staff due to instability of the funding decision. With the added impact of increasing volume of referrals and a linked impact to the increasing issues around translators and no recourse to public funding."

² Women's Aid Annual Survey 2017

“Not sure if there will be a refuge here after October of this year.”

“The most challenging issue our service faced in 2016/17 was trying to source ongoing funding to continue and expand current services where demand for the service often exceeds capacity.”