

Price of Safety webinar

09 October 2024

Housekeeping



The webinar is being recorded



BSL interpreters and closed captions are available



Use the Q&A function to submit questions



Use the chat function for support

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Agenda

How much it costs a survivor of abuse to flee

The extra costs and barriers faced by marginalised survivors

Supporting survivors under the current system

The changes needed to help more survivors access safety

Q&A

How much it costs a survivor of abuse to flee

Harriette Drew
Senior Policy Officer
Women's Aid

Why did we do this research?

Aim

- Quantify the financial challenges faced by survivors.
- Show which policy changes could have the most impact.

Research questions

- Over a year, how much could it financially cost a survivor to leave a perpetrator?
- To what extent are these costs currently covered by benefits, legal aid and other forms of financial support?



Methods



An illustrative case study based on research, data, a focus group and consultation with experts.



Estimates of 'direct costs' only, excluding everyday costs like groceries, bills and clothes.



Assuming full entitlement to state support.

Findings



Total costs	£49,000
Total support	£39,000
Deficit	£10,000

Deficit for those with no recourse to public funds:
£20,000

Immediate costs

Immediate costs

Costs
£1,000³
Support
£500

Table 1: Immediate costs

Category	Amount
Travel to flee	£100
Replacing essential possessions	£500
New ID	£120
New technology	£250
	Total: £970

- Had to travel some distance to be safe
- Fled quickly and secretly – couldn't carry heavy bags
- Perpetrator withheld ID which she needed to apply for benefits
- Phone/laptop may be compromised or broken

Table 2: Support for immediate costs

Category	Amount
Replacing essential possessions: Flexible Fund	£500

- Not just about amount – but also timing and accessibility

Housing

Housing
Costs
£13,500
Support
£8,900

Table 3: Housing costs	
Category	Amount
Temporary accommodation (6 months)	£4,800
Rental deposit	£960
Rent (6 months)	£4,800
Security	£300
Furniture and white goods	£2,500
	Total: £13,360

- Housing benefit (HB) subsidy covers 56%
- Future Fund grant covers 100%
- Universal Credit (UC) covers 90%, DHP covers the rest
- Sanctuary scheme covers 100%
- Local welfare schemes have declined – may be no support available

Survivors with NRPF would not be eligible for UC or HB

Worst case scenario

Flexible Fund	Not guaranteed past 2025
DHP	Relies on council's discretion
Legal aid	Relies on proof of domestic abuse
CMS	Perpetrator may not pay

Without this support, the deficit would be over £36,000

Variation

Higher costs

- Survivors in areas with high housing prices.
- Survivors with more children.
- Survivors with complex family law cases.
- Those who need a car or taxis to get around.

Lower support

- Survivors with no recourse to public funds.
- Survivors subject to the benefit cap or two-child limit.
- Survivors who struggle to navigate the benefits system.

The extra costs and barriers faced by marginalised survivors

Zainab Al-Shariff

Senior Independent Domestic
Violence Advocate
Al-Hasaniya

Barriers facing marginalised survivors

Isolation

Economic
abuse /
debt

Lack of
understanding
of rights &
which services
can assist

Immigration,
including
NRPF &
Asylum
Seekers

Financial
insecurity,
debt &
dependency
on perp

Visa status
weaponise
d by perp

Language
barrier

Pregnancy
/ children

Mental
health &
Trauma

Fear
reinforced in
the victim /
survivor

Cultural
barriers

Housing &
Homelessness

The changes we deserve to see

Abolish NRPF!

Referrals to specialist, by and for services

Specific grants for victims to tap into

MVDAC to be accessed by all

Ring fenced funding for by and for services

Accessing welfare support faster & abolishing the 5 week wait

Better provisions for refuges

Re-establishing a more efficient welfare system (e.g. sanctions)

Safer and better housing for victims

Accessing faster
and free
immigration
advice (legal
aid), inc for
asylum seekers

More support from
utility companies,
banks when victims
experience
economic abuse

Re-model the
Child
Maintenance
Service

Accessing legal
aid regardless of
income /
financial status

Services to work
in a trauma
informed
manner

Childcare
provisions for
victims and their
children

Better therapeutic
support that
considers the
victim's cultural &
linguistic needs

Transport
discounts

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Thank you!

- ▶ “Each one of us has lived through some devastation, some loneliness, some weather superstorm or spiritual superstorm, when we look at each other we must say, I understand.

I understand how you feel because I have been there myself. We must support each other and empathize with each other because each of us is more alike than we are unlike”

Maya Angelou

Al Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Centre

www.al-hasaniya.org.uk

https://x.com/Al_Hasaniya

<https://www.facebook.com/alhasaniyaUK>

Al-Hasaniya
Moroccan Women's Centre
مركز الحسنية للنساء المغربيات



Supporting survivors under the current system

Emma Gordon

Business Development Lead
My Sister's Place

Who are My Sister's Place (MSP)?



- Specialist Domestic Abuse Service
- Based in Middlesbrough in the North-East of England
- Employ 38 people and have a team of volunteers

Aim, Vision, Mission and Values



Our Aim – to encourage, enable and empower. We believe, given the right resources everyone has the capability to thrive

Our Vision – To create safer communities where everyone can live free from domestic abuse

Our Mission – To provide high-quality, innovative, end-to-end services which enable individuals and families to move from surviving to thriving

Aim, Vision, Mission and Values



Our Values – My Sister's Place stands for a place of safety, hope and change:

- A place of **SAFETY** for those seeking to escape from domestic abuse
- The right level of practical help and emotional support to aid recovery and build **HOPE**
- The possibility of a life **CHANGE** towards a better future

Our Services



- Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA)
- MI Project – IDVA support for clients aged 13 – 24
- IRIS Project – early intervention IDVA support through GP practices
- Economic Abuse Service
- Trauma-informed therapy and EMDR for adults
- ME TIME trauma therapy for children
- Community outreach – Ask Me Project, Freedom Programme & Stepping Stones
- Route 2 perpetrator support (currently not commissioned)
- Provide training

Our clients circumstances



- Left all belongings and fled the property
- No current entitlement to benefits – MVDAC to be completed
- Not claiming benefits they are entitled to
- Rent arrears – barrier to being re-housed
- Substantial debts, threats of enforcement action
- Complex needs – substance issues
- Language barriers
- Working with children's services and have a social worker

Economic Abuse Service



- Referrals are received from the IDVA service once a full assessment and safety plan has been completed.
- Provide practical and emotional support and look at removing the barriers currently being experienced to help people start rebuilding their lives.
- Benefit checks, income maximisation, benefit claims and appeals, attend assessments, apply for grants, school places, school meals, volunteering opportunities and training
- Immediate access to grants due to being a Smallwood Trust partner.
- 3 years of funding received from Lottery to expand the team due to the need

Outcomes 2023/2024



- £89,344 ongoing yearly entitlements
- £21,523 backdate of benefits
- £4,680 reduction in water rates
- £13,984 grants awarded via Buttle, Greggs, VRF
- 26,700 Smallwood grants awarded
- £15,592 Open Philanthropy Tackling Hardship Fund

- Turn2Us benefit check website
- Use your dedicated Jobcentre Plus Service Delivery Coaches
- Flexible Fund of Local Authority (for those with NRPF – can help with Refuge costs)
- Children's Services – they have funds (but they don't shout about it)
- Build relationships with Citizens Advice, Payplan, banks, LA, local support services, partnership working is key
- Utilise Surviving Economic Abuse website tools [Grants, benefits and financial help - Surviving Economic Abuse](#)

****Contact me if you would like to
discuss providing practical training
to your team****

Emma.gordon@mysistersplace.co.uk



What needs to change

Harriette Drew
Senior Policy Officer
Women's Aid

A safety net that works

Accessible

Sufficient

**Domestic abuse
informed**

Recommendations

Accessible

Exempt survivors from the no recourse to public funds condition

Exempt survivors from the legal aid means test

Build more social homes to meet demand

Sufficient

Link benefit levels to the cost of living

Uprate LHA rates each year

Scrap the two-child limit and benefit cap

Domestic abuse informed

Guarantee future funding for the Flexible Fund

Assess all new social security policies for their impact on survivors

Adequately fund specialist domestic abuse services

Q&A

Thank you

For more information:

Research Bulletin [sign-up](#)

On Track: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/what-we-do/ontrack/>

National Quality Standards: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/what-we-do/national-quality-standards/>

For more information please visit:
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until women & children are safe