On Track Data Briefing: 2023-24

Introduction

This briefing outlines data from On Track on the profile, needs and experiences of women accessing domestic abuse support services in the financial year 2023-24. On Track is Women's Aid's bespoke case management and outcomes monitoring system and is used by over 100 local domestic abuse services across every region in England.

Where survivors and services consent, the information collected through their daily work, their data contributes to an anonymous national dataset held by Women's Aid. As of September 2024, the On Track national dataset contained information on 239,234 survivors, 221,712 of whom are female, who have accessed domestic abuse services since the system was launched on 1st April 2016. The On Track national dataset is the largest dataset in the country on the experiences of survivors and their experiences accessing domestic abuse support services.

This report provides data on a sample of 40,120 female survivors recorded on On Track who finished a period of support from a refuge or community-based service using On Track in the year 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, and who consented for their anonymised data to be shared with Women's Aid. Of these:

▶ 3,834 accessed refuge services.

▶ 36,899 accessed community-based support (CBS) services.

Where a survivor accessed both a refuge and CBS service, they are represented twice in the data.

Additional On Track data is explored in the Annual Audit 2025 on the experiences of survivors during the cost-of-living crisis and rejected referrals.

Age

▶ The ages of survivors in our sample ranged from under 15 to over 91, with the most common age group being 25-34 years (34.3%), closely followed by 35-44 years (27.2%) and 18-24 (17.5%) .

▶ Older women are underrepresented in the sample. Only 2.5% of service users in the total sample were 65 or over and this fell to 0.7% in refuge services. This is unlikely to reflect need, as we know that older women experience particular barriers in accessing support (Age UK, 2020). The most recent Femicide Census Report showed that, in 2021, 24.0% of femicide victims were aged 66 and over (Femicide Census, 2022).

**Graph 1: Age of service users 2023-24**
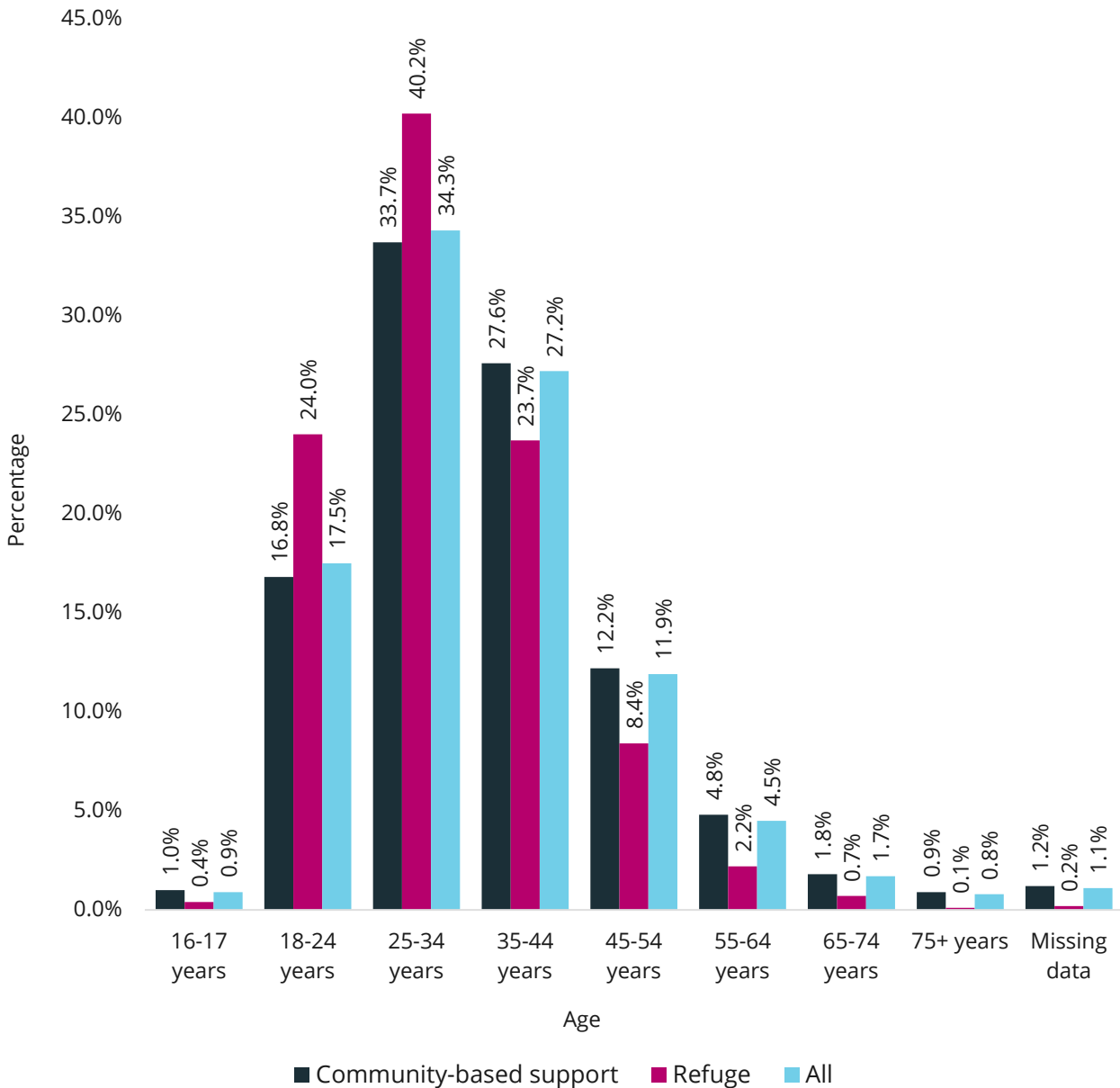
Children

There were 49,918 children of service users in the sample, averaging 1.2 children per service user across all service types. Of those service users who have children, the average number of children per service user was 2.1.

▶ In CBS services 60.8% of service users had children and 6.1% were pregnant. On average, there were 1.3 children per service user and 2.1 children per service user with children.

▶ In refuge, 58.5% of service users had children and 6.2% were pregnant. On average, there were 1.1 children per service user and 1.9 children per service user with children.
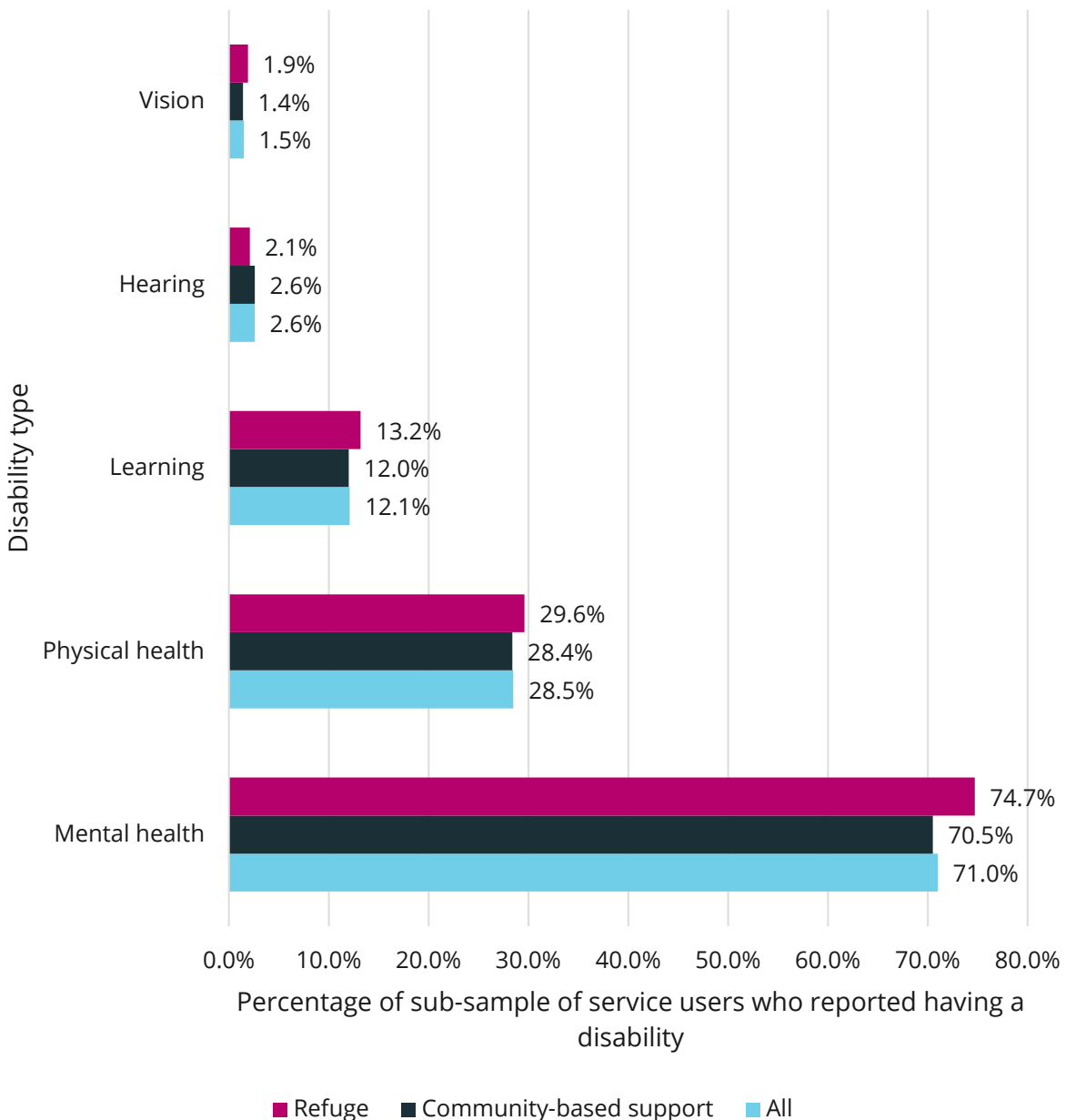
Graph 2: Average number of children per service user 2023-24
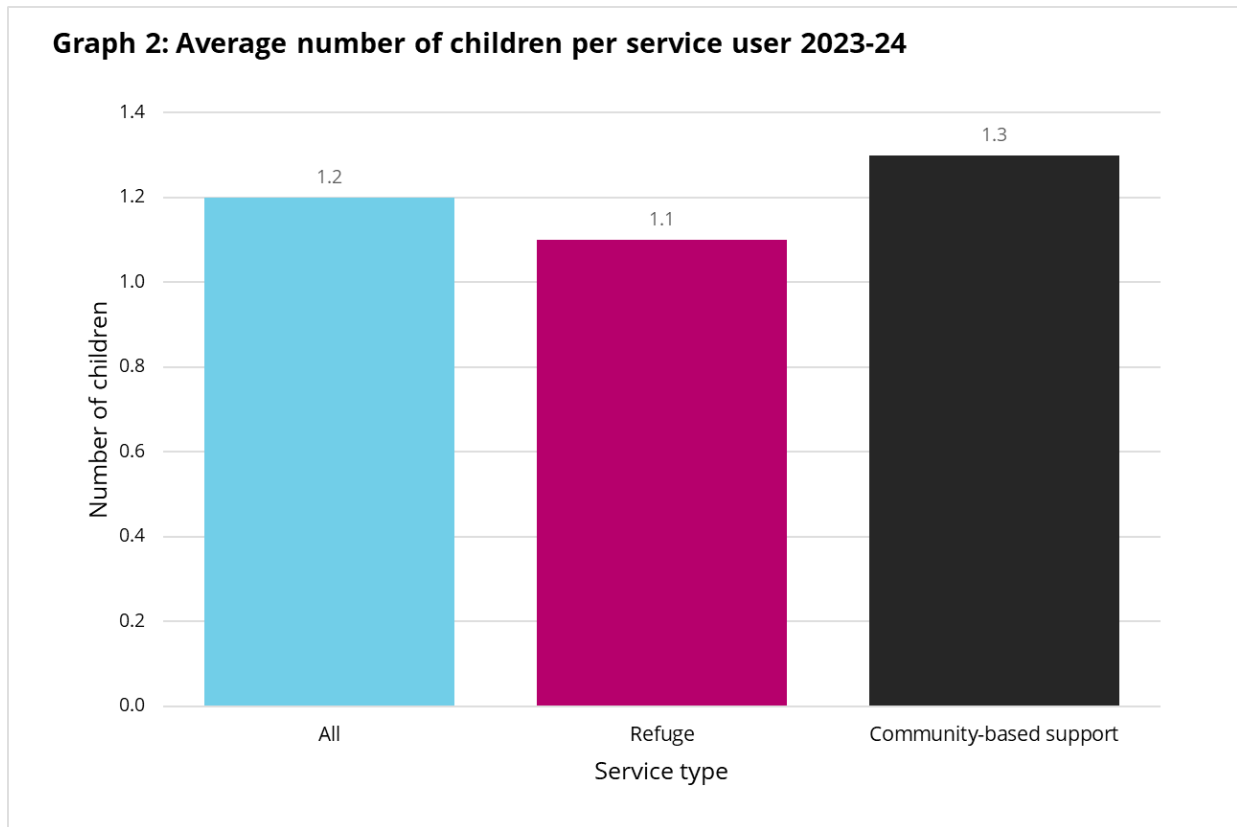
Disability

Overall, 32.8% of all survivors in the sample had at least one disability that they disclosed.

▶ In refuge services, 35.5% of service users reported having a disability; the most common disability reported was having a mental health condition (26.2%), followed by having a physical disability (10.4%).

▶ In CBS services, 32.6% of all service users reported having a disability; having a mental health condition was also the most common reported disability (23.0%), followed by having a physical disability (9.3%).

Graph 3: Types of disability reported by service users 2023-24

Disability type

Disability type	Refuge	Community-based support	All
Vision	1.9%	1.4%	1.5%
Hearing	2.1%	2.6%	2.6%
Learning	13.2%	12.0%	12.1%
Physical health	29.6%	28.4%	28.5%
Mental health	74.7%	70.5%	71.0%

Percentage of sub-sample of service users who reported having a disability

■ Refuge   ■ Community-based support   ■ All

Sexual orientation and gender identity

3.4% of service users identified as lesbian, bisexual, gay, asexual, pansexual or queer across service types. In refuge, this number was 4.5% and in CBS services it was 3.3%. 1.2% of services users overall identified as transgender across service types.

Graph 4: Sexual orientation of service users 2023-24

Legend: ■ Community-based support ■ Refuge ■ All

Data shown:
- Heterosexual: 84.6%, 84.9%, 84.6%
- LGBTQ+: 3.3%, 4.5%, 3.4%
- Missing data: 12.2%, 10.7%, 12.1%

Y-axis: Percentage (0.0% to 90.0%)
X-axis: Sexual orientation
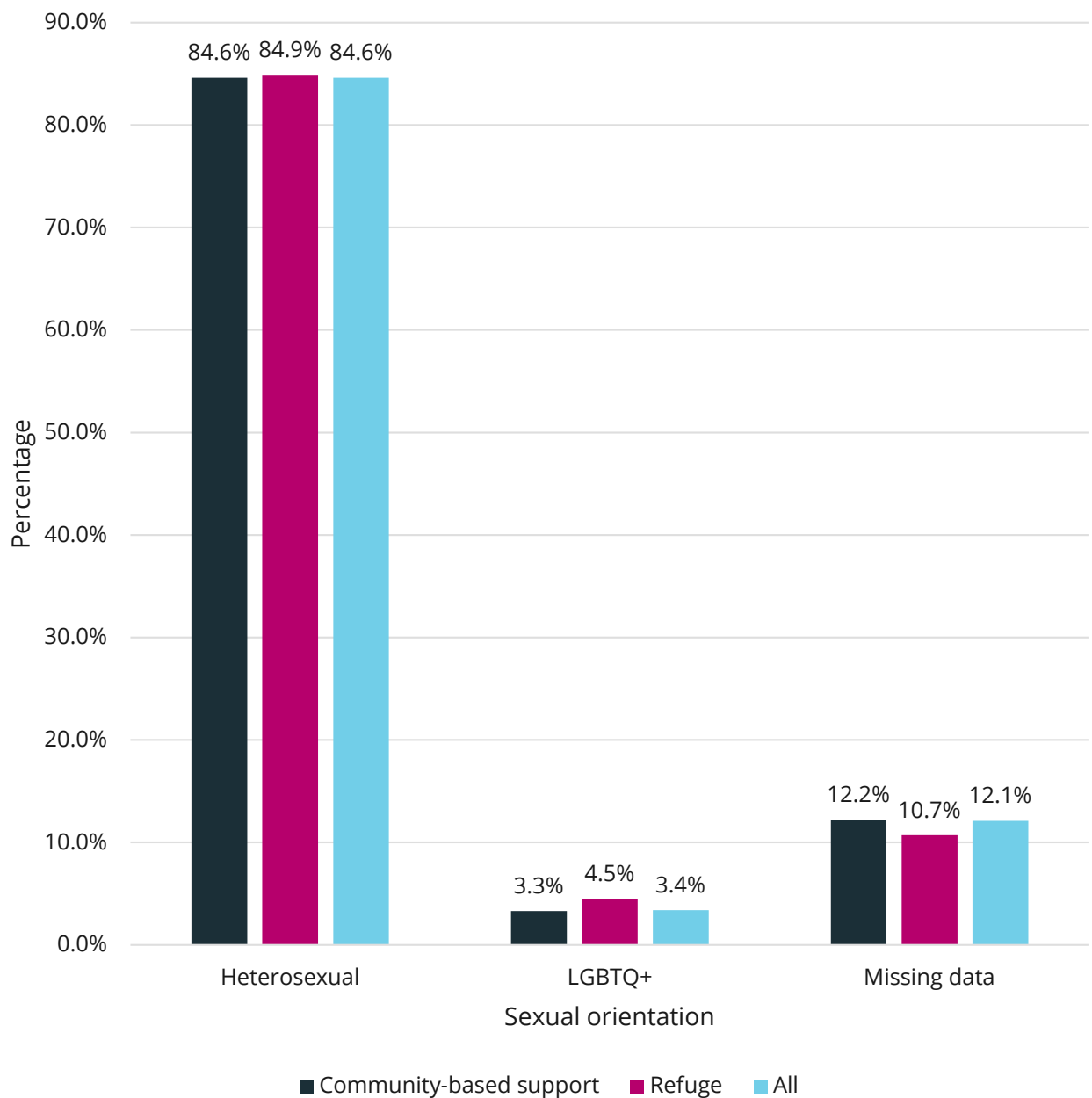
Ethnicity

Across all services, 65.0% of service users were White British. In refuge services, this was 53.7% and was 66.1% in CBS services. 10.5% of all service users were from Asian/Asian British ethnic backgrounds, and 5.8% were from Black/African/ Caribbean/Black British ethnic backgrounds.

Survivors experiencing additional inequalities are more likely to need refuge due to the additional barriers they face in accessing support.

Table 1: What are the ethnic backgrounds of service users? 2023- 24	Community-based support services (36,899)	Refuge (3,834)	All (40,120)
Asian/Asian British			
Indian	1.7%	2.0%	1.7%
Pakistani	4.3%	10.0%	4.8%
Bangladeshi	1.4%	2.1%	1.4%
Chinese	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%
Any other Asian background	2.3%	3.0%	2.3%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British			
African	2.9%	6.2%	3.2%
Caribbean	1.3%	2.0%	1.3%
Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	1.2%	1.7%	1.3%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Background			
White and Black Caribbean	1.4%	2.0%	1.4%
White and Black African	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
White and Asian	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
Any other Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Background	1.2%	1.4%	1.2%
Other Ethnic group			
Arab	0.7%	1.8%	0.8%
Any other ethnic group	1.1%	2.9%	1.3%
White			
British	66.1%	53.7%	65.0%
Irish	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%
Eastern European	2.7%	3.3%	2.8%
Roma	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Any other White background	3.5%	4.1%	2.5%
Don't know	**4.2%**	**0.5%**	**2.8%**
Not asked	**1.9%**	**0.7%**	**0.6%**
Declined	**0.2%**	**0.2%**	**0.2%**

Nationality and citizenship

Across all service types, 12.0% of service users were non-British nationals. In CBS services this was 10.6% and was 26.1% in refuge. Of all service users who were non-British nationals, 31.6% had no recourse to public funds. This was 32.6% in CBS services and 27.5% in refuge.

Service users who were non-British nationals reported having a range of immigration statuses. The most commonly reported type of immigration status was Indefinite leave to remain (18.7%) followed by spouse visa (17.0%).

Graph 5: Recourse to public funds for those who are not British nationals 2023-24
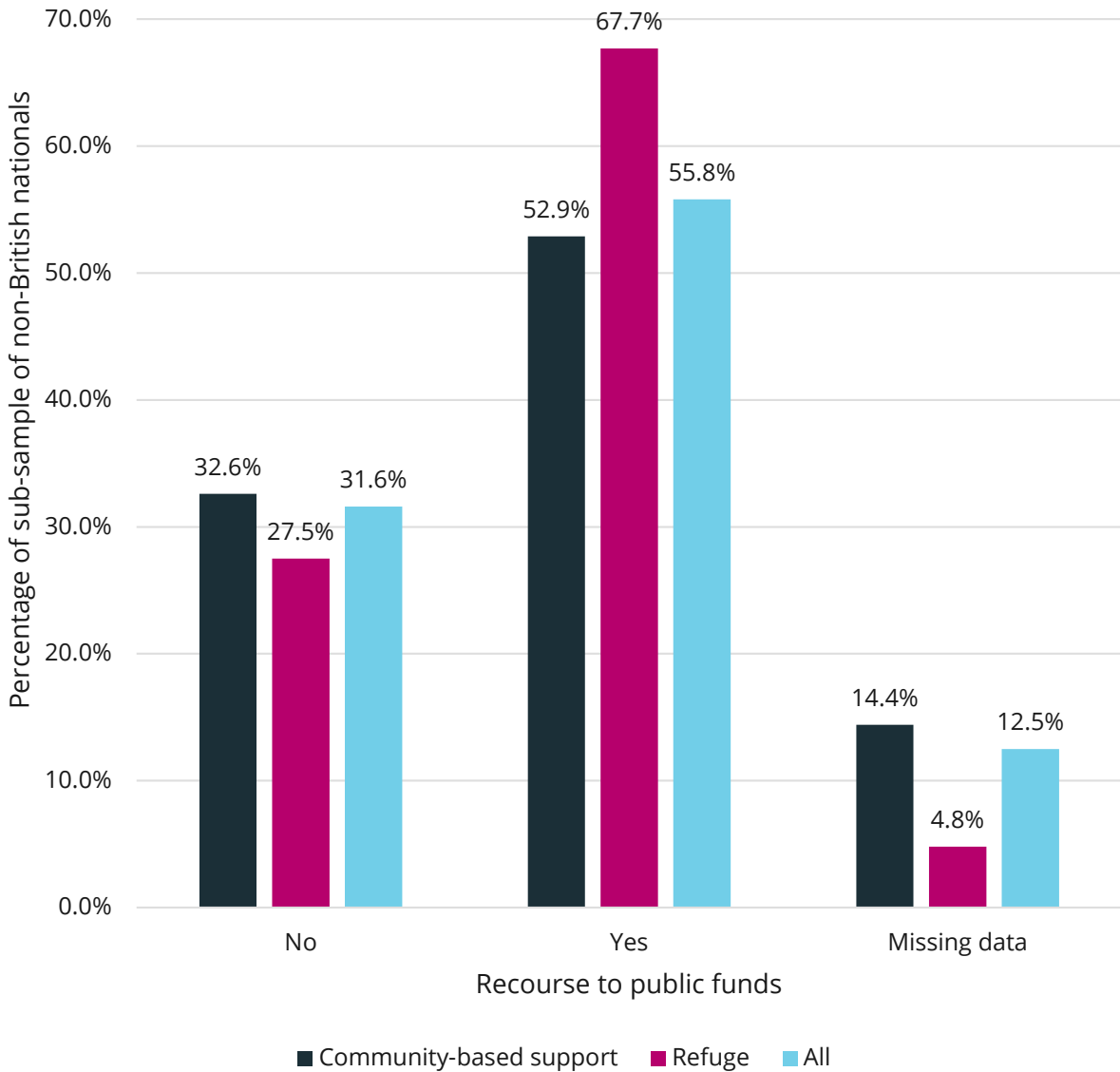
Table 2: Immigration status

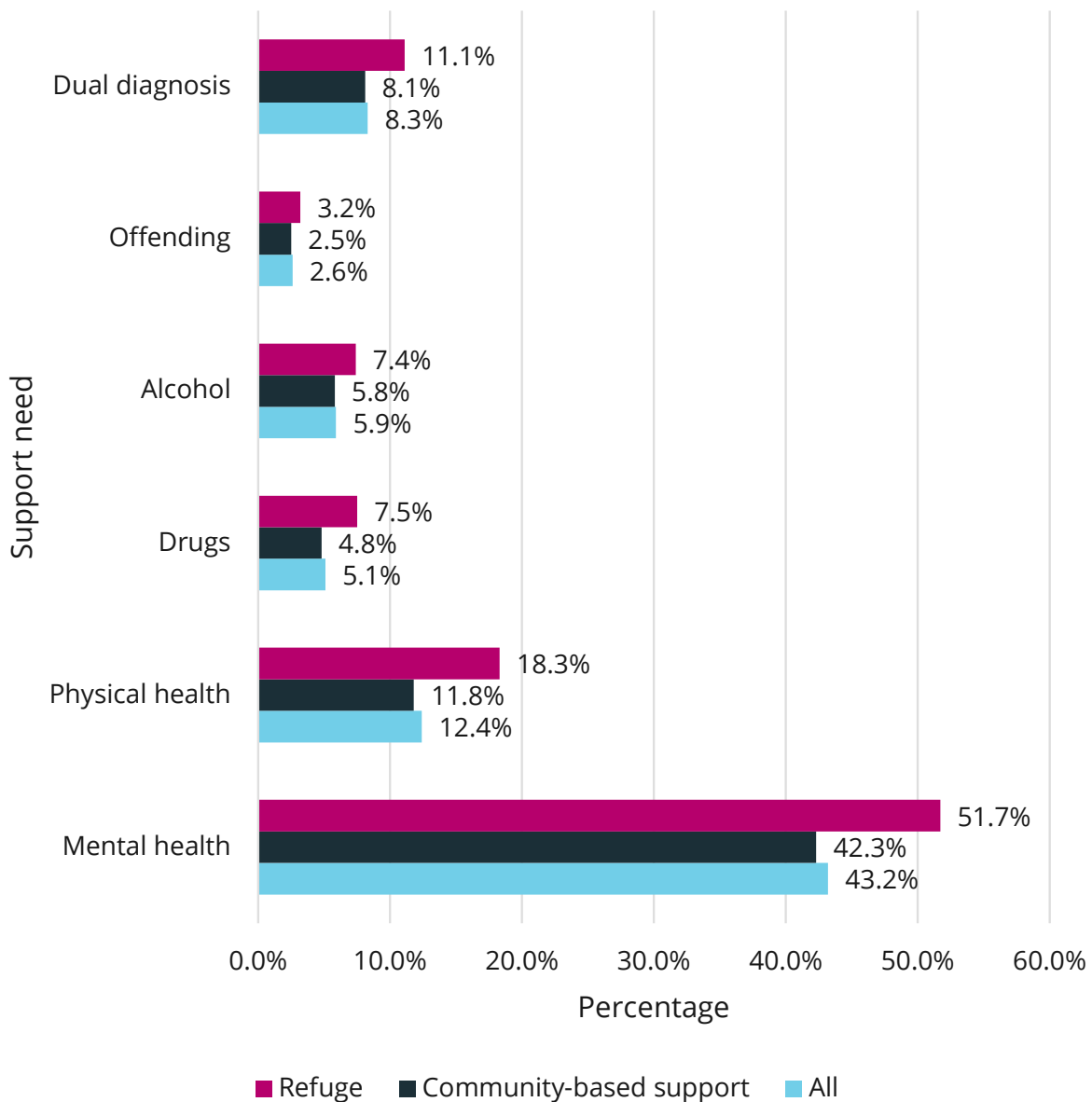| What are the immigration statuses of service users (of those who are not British nationals)? 2023-24	Community-based support services	Refuge	All
Indefinite leave to remain (ILR)	17.1%	25.4%	18.7%
Spouse visa	16.3%	20.1%	17.0%
EEA national currently working	2.0%	0.5%	1.7%
EEA national other	1.1%	0.6%	1.0%
EEA family member	1.4%	0.6%	1.3%
EEA national financially self-supporting	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
EEA national in UK studying	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
EEA national receiving welfare benefits	0.8%	1.2%	0.9%
UK nationals	5.1%	3.5%	4.8%
Limited leave to remain	5.7%	11.2%	6.7%
Insecure / no status	2.2%	2.8%	2.3%
Dependent on husband / wife's visa	3.5%	3.5%	2.5%
Asylum seeker awaiting decision	3.6%	1.0%	3.1%
Discretionary leave to remain	0.9%	2.4%	1.2%
Humanitarian protection	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%
Refugee	0.9%	1.3%	1.0%
Study visa	2.9%	0.2%	2.3%
Work visa(s)	2.5%	0.5%	2.1%
Visitor's visa	0.8%	0.5%	0.7%
Pre-Settled Status	6.5%	7.6%	6.7%
Settled status	14.5%	10.4%	13.7%
Family reunification	0.3%	0.7%	0.4%
Parent visa	0.7%	0.5%	0.7%
Not asked	**3.3%**	**0.9%**	**2.8%**
Missing data	**0.6%**	**0.2%**	**0.5%**
Declined	**0.2%**	**0.0%**	**0.1%**
Unknown	**6.8%**	**4.3%**	**6.3%**

Support needs

43.2% of service users had support needs around their mental health; this was 42.3% in CBS services and for those in refuge services this was higher at 50.1%. The link between domestic abuse as a driver of mental ill health is well established, yet many survivors still face barriers when accessing adequate mental health support. Women's Aid's Deserve To Be Heard campaign sets out seven pillars for an effective mental health response to survivors, including providing women-only spaces and support delivered by professionals with expertise on domestic abuse (Women's Aid, 2022b).

8.3% of service users had a 'dual diagnosis' and had support needs around mental health and drug and/or alcohol use. 12.4% had support needs around their physical health; for service users in CBS this was 11.8% and for those in refuge services this was higher at 18.3%.

Graph 6: Support needs of service users 2023-24

Support need	Refuge	Community-based support	All
Dual diagnosis	11.1%	8.1%	8.3%
Offending	3.2%	2.5%	2.6%
Alcohol	7.4%	5.8%	5.9%
Drugs	7.5%	4.8%	5.1%
Physical health	18.3%	11.8%	12.4%
Mental health	51.7%	42.3%	43.2%

Percentage

■ Refuge ■ Community-based support ■ All

Experiences of abuse

▶ From a sub-sample of service users where perpetrator information was recorded, 93.8% of perpetrators were male and 80.0% were the current or ex-partner of the survivor.

▶ The length of abuse ranged from 0 to 50 years. The average length of abuse was 6 years.

▶ Survivors reported experiencing different types of abuse including emotional abuse (87.3%), jealous and controlling behaviour (65.6%) and physical abuse (54.0%).

▶ 31.7% of survivors experienced financial abuse. This was higher in refuge at 52.1%. For more information about survivor's experiences during the cost-of-living crisis, please view our Annual Audit 2025 report.

▶ Survivors also reported experiencing types of abusive behaviours. This included threats to kill (24.8%), attempted strangulation/suffocation (21.6%) and surveillance through social media (9.8%).
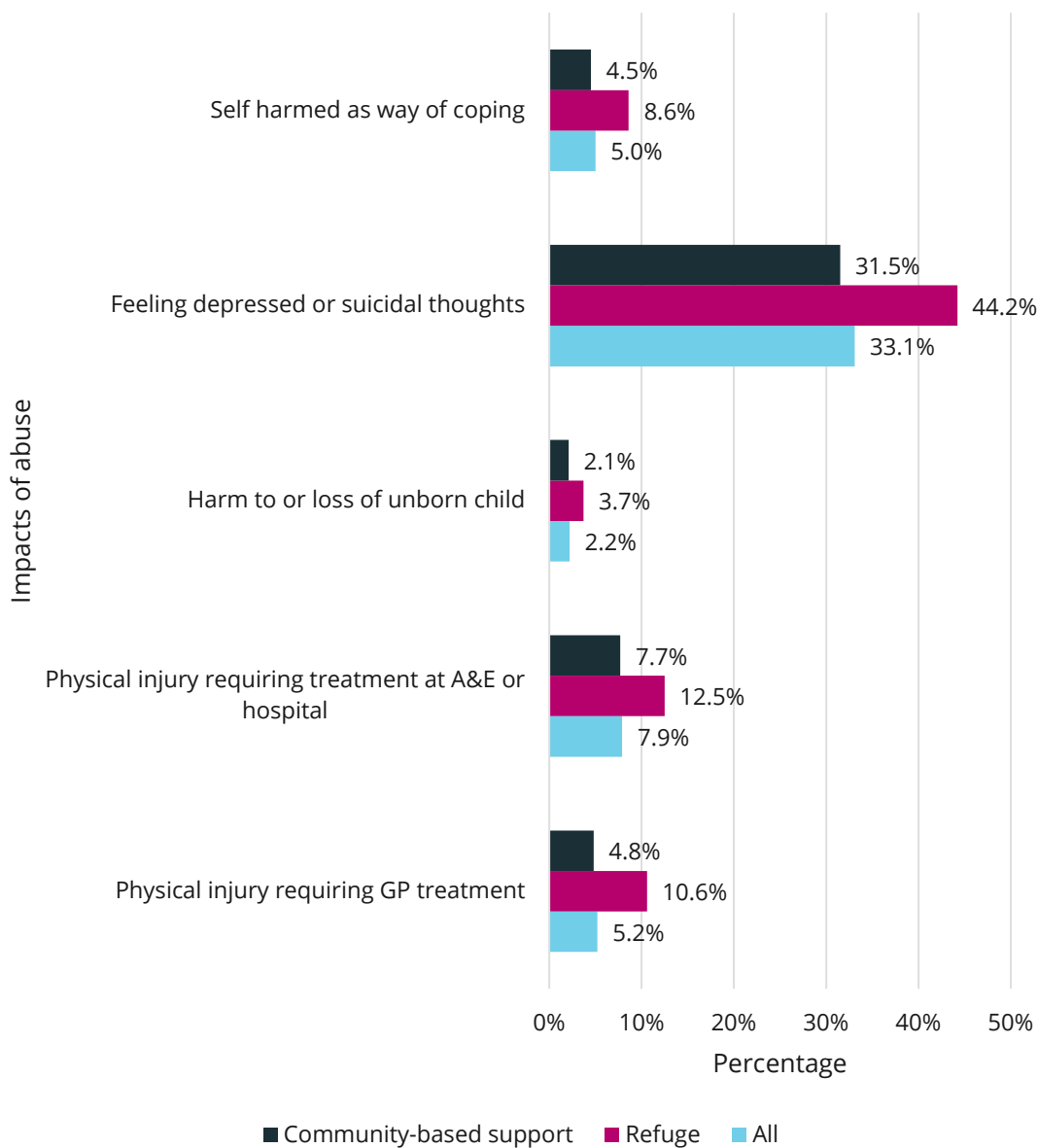
Graph 7: Types of abuse and abusive behaviours experienced by service users 2023-24

Surveillance or harassment online or through social media
- Refuge: 9.3%
- Community-based support: 16.1%
- All: 9.8%

Attempted strangulation/suffocation
- Refuge: 22.0%
- Community-based support: 26.7%
- All: 21.6%

Threats to kill
- Refuge: 24.5%
- Community-based support: 34.3%
- All: 24.8%

Emotional/psychological abuse
- Refuge: 90.1%
- Community-based support: 87.6%
- All: 87.3%

Financial abuse
- Refuge: 52.1%
- Community-based support: 29.4%
- All: 31.7%

Surveillance/harassment/stalking
- Refuge: 38.6%
- Community-based support: 34.4%
- All: 34.4%

Jealous/controlling behaviour
- Refuge: 71.0%
- Community-based support: 66.2%
- All: 65.6%

Sexual abuse
- Refuge: 26.7%
- Community-based support: 16.4%
- All: 17.2%

Physical abuse
- Refuge: 66.6%
- Community-based support: 53.2%
- All: 54.0%

Types of abuse (y-axis)
Percentage (x-axis): 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100%

Legend:
- Refuge
- Community-based support
- All

Impacts of abuse

▶ 33.1% of survivors reported feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts because of the abuse. This was higher in refuge at 44.2%. 5.0% reported self-harming as a way of coping with the abuse.

▶ 2.2% of survivors experienced harm to of loss of an unborn child.

▶ 7.9% of survivors had to have treatment at A&E or the hospital and 5.2% reported needing GP treatment.

Graph 8: Impacts of abuse experienced by service users 2023-24

Self harmed as way of coping
- 4.5%
- 8.6%
- 5.0%

Feeling depressed or suicidal thoughts
- 31.5%
- 44.2%
- 33.1%

Harm to or loss of unborn child
- 2.1%
- 3.7%
- 2.2%

Physical injury requiring treatment at A&E or hospital
- 7.7%
- 12.5%
- 7.9%

Physical injury requiring GP treatment
- 4.8%
- 10.6%
- 5.2%

Impacts of abuse

Percentage

■ Community-based support ■ Refuge ■ All

References

Femicide Census. (2024). *Femicide report 2021*.

Women's Aid. (2022) *"Are you listening?" 7 Pillars for a survivor-led approach to mental health support*. Bristol: Women's Aid.

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