

1. DEMAND



Due to the national shortage of services, there is currently no definitive measure of demand. Estimates of prevalence, support needs reported by survivors, and data on referrals, caseloads and waiting lists provide some indication of demand for different types of services. However, until provision and awareness of what remains very much a hidden crime improves to a point where all of those needing support are able to make contact with services, there will be an unknown quantity in measuring demand.

Current estimates for the prevalence of domestic abuse are drawn from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, however, these figures are subject to a number of limitations including that they are likely to underestimate the gendered nature of domestic abuse.



The On Track national referral estimates estimate that **11,305 women** and **12,436 children** were supported by **refuge** services and **112,866**

women and **146,726 children** were supported in **community-based support** services.



An estimated **1.6 million women** in England aged 16+ experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2024. This means that **less than**

one in ten women estimated to have experienced domestic abuse **received support** from a refuge or community-based support service.



Each woman in service had on average 1.2 children, which could mean that an estimated 1.8 million children also experienced domestic

abuse in that year, excluding older children experiencing domestic abuse in their own relationships. **This would mean that less than one in ten children experiencing domestic abuse received support in a refuge or community-based support service.**



60.1% of referrals into refuge services were rejected over the past year. The most common reason for

rejection was that the refuge service did not have the capacity to support the client (45.7% rejected referrals).



Just over half (51.4%) of referrals into community-based domestic abuse services were rejected. The

most common reasons for rejection were that the client did not want support (25.7%), the survivor was already being supported by the organisation (23.5%), and the service could not contact the client (22.6%).



Respondents to the annual survey reported that an increasing volume of referrals into their service had been a significant challenge over the past year, as well as increasing referrals for women with multiple support needs. **Some services even reported needing to temporarily close referrals for a number of weeks in order to manage demand.**