

2. PROVISION



Although there is some regional variation, there has been an **increase in overall bedspaces in England** since 2023, continuing an upward trend each year since 2010. However, this figure **still falls short by 1,160 spaces** of the Council of Europe's recommendation¹⁶ and represents a total shortfall of 20.3%.



Despite the year-on-year increase in refuge bedspaces, the number of **vacancies** posted on Routes to Support has been **decreasing** each year since 2019/20. Refuge services may be facing issues that are impacting their capacity, with many respondents in the annual survey citing the **current housing crisis** as impacting their availability of refuge spaces.



There was a **small net increase of domestic abuse service providers** in England in the year, from 236 providers running 401 local services in 2022-23, to 246 providers running 414 local services in 2023-24.



There has been a **decline in the number of specialist support workers** who can offer support around alcohol use, substance use, and mental health in both refuge and community-based services in the past year.



Availability of **services run exclusively for specific groups of survivors**, including services run exclusively for Black and minoritised women, and women with substance use and/or mental health support needs services, **continues to be low**: spaces in dedicated services made up just 11.6% of all refuge spaces in England, and 42.0% of these spaces are in London.



The proportion of vacancies that could consider a woman with **no recourse to public funds** increased slightly from 11.7% of all vacancies in 2022-23 but remains low at 12.3% in 2023-24.



Vacancies suitable for wheelchair users are incredibly scarce and dropped from 1.0% of all vacancies in 2022-23 to just 0.7% (52) vacancies in 2023-24.



There was an **increase in the number of local services which offered a dedicated service for children and young people** (CYP) in England, from 238 services offering a CYP service in May 2023 to 247 services in May 2024. This included 195 refuge services which offered a CYP service in May 2024, a slight increase from 187 refuges in May 2023. One hundred forty-five (145) CBS services were offering a CYP service in May 2024, which is little changed from 144 CBS services in May 2023.

Although the number of local services offering a dedicated CYP service has increased slightly, just 69.6% of all refuge services and 51.8% of CBS services running at May 2024 were offering a dedicated CYP service. This means that **just under a third of refuge services and just under half of CBS services did not offer dedicated support for children and young people.**

¹⁶ Council of Europe (2008): "...safe accommodation in specialised women's shelters, available in every region, with one family place per 10,000 head of population." (p. 51). Based on the ONS mid-year population estimate for 2022: 57,106,398