



# Women's Resource Centre

## ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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### VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

- It is estimated that there are 270 refuge organisations providing 567 refuges in England. <sup>1</sup>
- There are 68 refuges and at least 25 specialist domestic violence projects in Greater London. <sup>2</sup>
- In England, there are approximately 40 refuge support services which are specialist refuges striving to meet the needs of differing groups of BME women and children. <sup>3</sup>
- 12% of London women's groups were specifically working in domestic and sexual (i.e. their core organisational remit). <sup>4</sup>
- Many women accessing other services, such as health, education, training etc have also been affected by violence. As a result, 51% of all women's groups in London are providing some level of support and information on violence. <sup>4</sup>
- Outside of London, there are at least 38 rape crisis centre service providers in England and Wales <sup>5</sup>, at least 4 voluntary and community sector rape/sexual assault projects in London. <sup>2</sup>
- "Fewer than 20% of rape victims ever report a rape. We need to ensure that services exist to support women to take their cases to the police if they choose. A properly funded support service accessible to all women rape victims is long overdue". (Vera Baird MP QC) <sup>6</sup>
- 67% of London women's domestic and sexual violence groups experienced funding crises. <sup>7</sup>
- In a study of BME women's voluntary and community organisations that worked in domestic violence or health, only 2 out of 13 groups had been able to procure dedicated funding. <sup>8</sup>
- "Many refuges cannot afford to provide services to women with no recourse to public funds [i.e. subject to the '2 Year Rule'] as they rely on the rental and housing benefit income for the refuges survival. Many Black and Asian women's refuges do accept women with no recourse and have been at the forefront of the campaigns around equal rights for all women. Such refuges are usually the most under resourced refuges". <sup>9</sup>

### SERVICES

- "The role of outreach services has been especially crucial for BME women who are more likely to under-use refuge support services. They are also likely to have a low level of awareness/knowledge about the existence of refuges services and thus likely to endure violence for longer periods". (p3) <sup>3</sup>
- The 1996 British Crime Survey revealed that 12% of disabled women aged 16-29 had experienced domestic violence in 1995 compared with 8.2% of non-disabled women of the same age <sup>10</sup>, yet services for disabled women are often inappropriate or non-existent.
- "Access audits of any new refuges should be encouraged to be done by disabled women who are aware of the issues around domestic violence as well as the practical physical issues of access. The Government could make this part of giving this money to agencies". (p4) <sup>11</sup>





- “Everyone dealing with women experiencing and escaping from abuse, including NHS, police, local authority and voluntary sector workers, should keep records about disability”.<sup>13</sup>
- At least 1 in 4 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people experience domestic violence in their relationships and from members of their families but there are no mainstream services in the UK for LGBT people facing domestic violence.<sup>13</sup>
- Lesbians fleeing domestic violence routinely face homophobia in women’s refuges.<sup>13</sup>
- Reports of violence against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women indicate that, like violence against heterosexual women, the perpetrator is likely to be known to the victim yet the clear up rate, when reported to the Police, is low and inconsistent across London boroughs.<sup>14</sup>

## SERVICE DELIVERY

- In the year 2001/02, the national network of Women’s Aid Federation of England (WAFE) domestic violence service providers supported a total of 143,337 women and 114,489 children (with over 40,000 women and children staying in their refuges).<sup>1</sup>
- A census conducted by WAFE on 8 February 2000 estimated that a total of 2,328 women and 3,120 children were accommodated in 258 refuges in England as a result of domestic violence on that day.<sup>15</sup>
- In 2001/2002, Women’s Aid National 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline took 56,566 calls.<sup>16</sup>
- In this same period, 65,300 contacts were made to Scottish Women’s Aid service providers.<sup>17</sup>
- Requests for 12,932 bed spaces were made of Scottish Women’s Aid refuges during 2001/02, yet refuges were only able to provide safe shelter for just over a quarter.<sup>17</sup>
- In another study, 200 women asked for safe refuge in England (nearly 300 in the UK) and could not be accommodated in already full refuges.<sup>18</sup>
- In 2002/03, Northern Ireland Women’s Aid Federation (NIWAF) affiliated refuges received 17,580 calls, 520 requests for information, provided accommodation for 989 women and 1,112 children and provided non-accommodation support to at least 4,451 women.<sup>19</sup>
- “[T]he employment of BME staff is of great importance to women and can lead to a rise in the number of enquiries/referrals by and of women from similar backgrounds”. (p4)<sup>3</sup>

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